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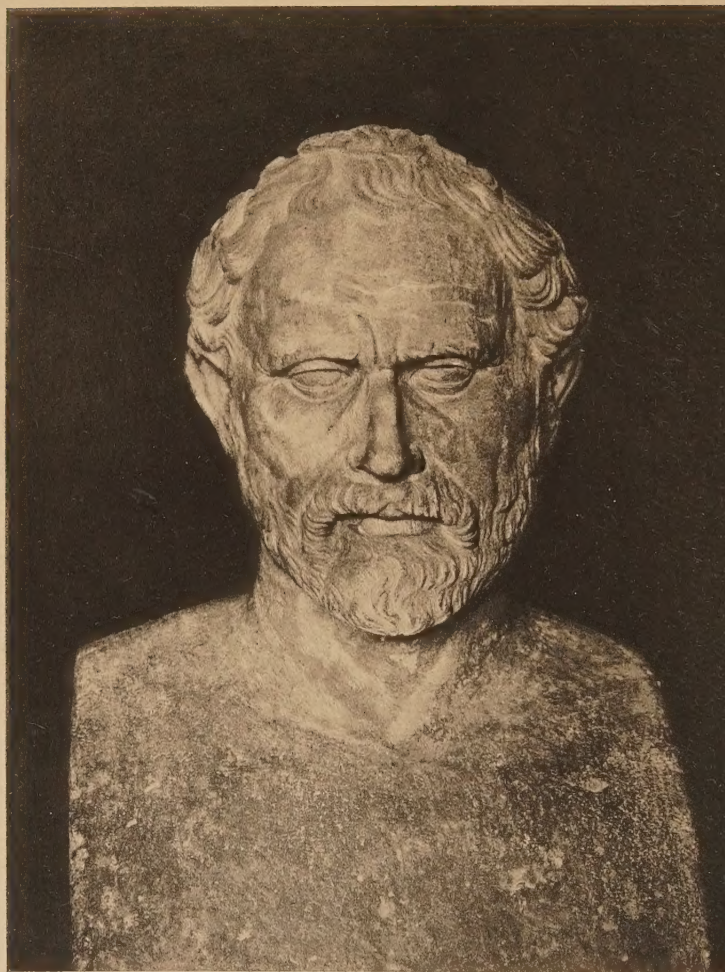


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ΔΗΜΟΣΘΕΝΗΣ

GEORGES CLEMENCEAU

DEMOSTHENES

Translated by
CHARLES MINER THOMPSON

ILLUSTRATED



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NOTE

THE translator thanks PROFESSOR ANDRÉ MORIZE, of Harvard University, for guiding him through the more deceptive mazes of the most delightful of languages.

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DEMOSTHENES



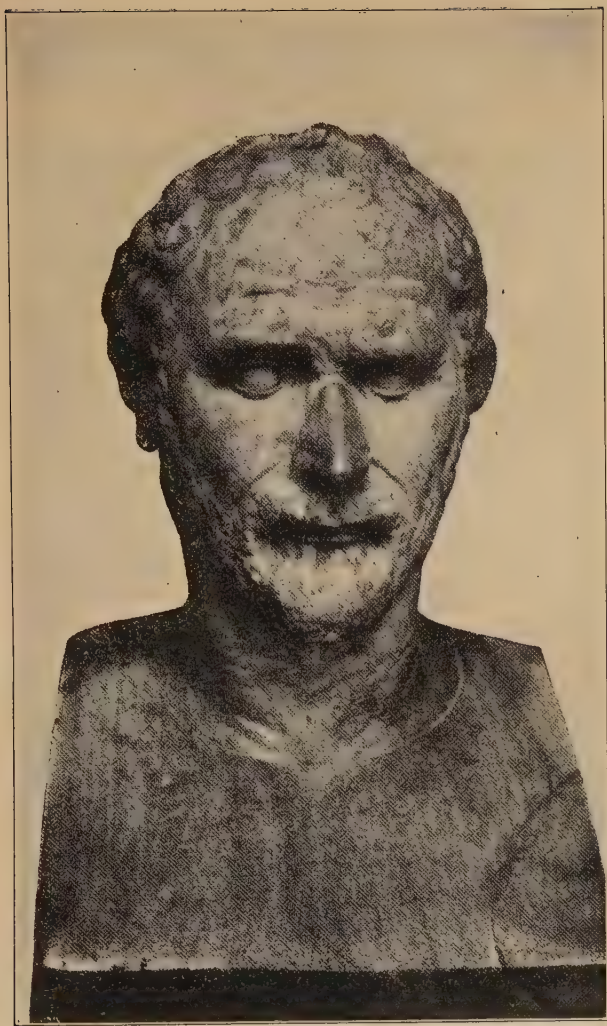
CHAPTER I

MEN of Athens, do you recognize him? Even too familiar to you was that mask, as intellectual as it is resolute, in which the tragic reflection of your own destiny at once attracted and repelled you. The forehead is large and expressive of a restless power, but the art of the Greek has not been able to reproduce the luminous energy of the glance. The lines of the face are firm, but make no parade of severity. The clenched teeth, the compressed lips, softened by the pointed chin of the thinker, reveal not so much of hardness as of the inward tremors of a reason that sees the abyss and rushes upon it with open eyes. The dominating dome of the head shows the power that carried the man across everything; it is a volcano hammered from within by lava eager to leap from the depths of the crater and to overrun

and master the land. With all the strength of a man, he bore for you the weight of hopes beyond your strength. On you has rested the sinister charge of his death. The tragedy of his life was that he spent it wholly in the effort to save from itself the most idealistic of peoples — a people by whose frivolity the most beautiful conception of human enlightenment was doomed to odious failure.¹

Search your memories, you who were the protagonists of an ideal that you discussed rather than lived. Go down into the disorder of your recollections. Give judgment on yourselves. You were pliant to the

¹ The bust here reproduced is in the British Museum. The different busts of Demosthenes pass as having been reproduced from the statue made by Polyeuctos, and set up in Athens after the tragedy of Calauria. Plutarch tells us that the orator had his hands crossed, but in the existing models he holds a scroll. A bronze statuette found at the house of a merchant of Constantinople and reproduced in the *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* in 1924 seems to me much nearer the truth of nature. [In 1901, P. Hartwig found in the garden of the Palazzo Barberini in Rome a pair of clasped hands in marble. They fitted exactly on the arms of a cast of the Vatican statue, and it is regarded as virtually certain that they belonged to a marble copy of the original bronze by Polyeuctos. The illustration facing page 134 shows the cast with the clasped hands. It is taken from Emanuel Loewy's *Die Griechische Plastik*.]



DEMOSTHENES
The bust in the British Museum

point of inconsistency. After the hemlock came the day of the statue — both for Demosthenes and for Phocion, his constant opponent. Ah, your attention quickens? Yes, it is indeed the untiring orator whose image I evoke, the man who was preëminently the good soldier of the fatherland. He aspired to lift you to the height of his own energetic soul, of his own will — an inspiration that, had it been realized, would have placed you in the forefront of human history. Born for great achievements, you were able merely to conceive and to attempt them — not to realize them. I want to consult the sorrowful catalogue of your grandeurs and your humiliations in order to draw therefrom the lesson they may hold for those whom the fatalities of descent have led after you into the higher paths of human idealism. May I, in the *Champs-Élysées*, awaken your remorse? Can the lives of others really teach us how to discipline our own? Men say so. It is good to make the experiment.

This man, who was as completely a man as could anywhere be found, you have seen

at the foot of the Acropolis when Greece was undergoing the most tragic emotions of its greatest days. In the heights of victory or in the depths of defeat, at the very heart of the horrible struggle, there was not a day when you did not find him faithful to your cause, which, in the days when you carried the torch of human life, he made identical with his own existence. What did you do with him? What did you do with yourselves? So unstable were your hopes and fears that with the same intensity you acclaimed him, feared him, deified him, denied him, spurned him, betrayed him, murdered him. Now History, like an avenging Fury, rises before you to punish your crime — a crime that we ourselves, your successors, do not cease to expiate.

— In that time he was the *monster* — the superman — so called in admiration by his cruellest enemy. Little children, who feel before they understand, pointed their fingers at him and murmured, ‘That’s he!’ and it was he indeed — an inexplicable force, superior to despair, not less feared

by his enemies themselves than by his trembling friends, who, seeing him so firm, felt their courage fail to follow him. With too faithful a prevision of your own future weakness, you were frightened at his unshakable resolution. It was as if you had anticipated the reproach that weighs you down—the reproach that in betraying him you betrayed not only yourselves, but all the future generations of men.

Æschines, the adroit talker who was in the pay of Philip, you repelled indeed, but not without a secret partiality, for you asked yourselves whether you might not sometime need to seek his intercession with the conqueror. To Phocion, the haughty ‘defeatist’ who took so great a pleasure in openly overwhelming you with his contempt, you renewed indefinitely his appointment as general, though he never did you the honor to ask it. Such contradictions were the very tissue of your life. In the murmur of fugitive words that charmed you especially with their sonority you made of that life a graceful picture in which it pleased you to recognize your-

selves. The world heard and has remembered your sigh of relief when after the inglorious defeat at Cranon you heard that all was over with Demosthenes and with his calls to the suffering that too great virtues require. Now the end had really come; at last you were going to live in the sweet peace of decadence, accepting all sorts of servitudes as they came. Antipater, fresh from the execution, gave himself the supreme pleasure of weeping for his redoubtable enemy.

However, life goes on. The universe knows no *dénouement*. Impassible time brings us for our edification the lengthening perspectives that place men and events on their proper plane. Great men and small become no more than the dust of history. From the noblest actions as from the basest there floats up a confused memory that too often permits men to misrepresent past lives in the interest of present controversies. That seems far from the eternal justice expected from the valley of Jehoshaphat. In death as in life the absolute escapes us. Whoever is not morally pre-

pared to be sufficient unto himself must expect disaster.

Demosthenes, burning furnace of irrepressible powers, chose an ideal level with his abilities, which far exceeded the ordinary measure. I doubt that he ever took the time to judge himself. Finding adversaries worthy of his strength, he was able, even in the worst of times, to use the full thrust of his energy and he knew defeat only through the weakness of his soldiers. Master of his fate even in his latest breath, perhaps his last pleasure lay in finding himself at length delivered from those for whom he was about to die. To weigh in the balance the good and the evil of his life, as they flowed from his experience of the strength or weakness of his contemporaries, apparently never occurred to his mind. He had the good fortune to know himself only as a natural force that to be justified needs but to be exercised. He was the spokesman of a most resplendent cause. His ideal supported him. Vanquished, calling poison to his aid when his god refused him a miracle, he still

soared high above defeat by sheer power of will. Demosthenes would have saved his country had it consented to be saved. Man does not suffer salvation; he makes it. He must know how to forge it with his own hands. When the enthusiasm of the moment is past, unending endurance is the virtue that crowns the success of a day with the confirmation of the morrow.

CHAPTER II

WE may well ask why Macedonia, an ill-defined land inhabited by unknown races, emerged into history only to give us Philip and Alexander and then to sink forever into oblivion. The fact is one constituent — and by no means the least remarkable — of that ‘Greek Miracle’ which Renan invoked in order to characterize the basic evolution of the human mind from which our present ‘civilization’ springs.

I admit that it does not adequately explain matters to talk, with no further attempt at precision, of the contact of Europe and Asia, notable fact in human history though it was. Nevertheless, it remains true that the decisive turn in our intellectual progress took place in the borderland between two strikingly different civilizations. One had long been undergoing an intellectual development of which the Vedas and the Zend Avesta remain the indisputable proofs; the other was more

obscure and slower in its activity, but was fitted to give order and stability to the subtle manifestations of emotional forces, among which a fiery, primitive imagination seems to have held too large a place. Incontestably, civilization came to us from the Orient by way of the Mediterranean Sea. The traditions of our thought were formed in that meeting-place of races. Could the bottom of that great maritime lake have been raised, the history of our intellectual growth would be quite different. The thought should move us to modesty. Thanks to relays of islands we find among the original activities of the Ægæan civilization ¹ a constant intercourse between the two continents. Productions of all kinds were constantly exchanged between them. Semites of Tyre and Sidon were active in the business. The occupation of the trader and of the pirate were long confounded, whether the person came from the Occident or from the Orient. Men, women, and children were a profitable merchandise. With the first

¹ G. Glotz : *La Civilisation égéenne*.

faint tracings of history the mutual attraction between a budding Europe and an Asia in full flower bursts on every eye. Without facing the problem of Greek origins, we may remind ourselves of the important influence that Ionia had on the advance of Greek thought and of the struggles of Hellenism established on the shores of Asia Minor against the power of the Great King, who was not to be borne unless he were no more than a part of the stage setting — a mere figurehead. Ægæan civilization had long taken possession of the sea, but the bravest mariner could do no more than sail from one territory to the other and exchange products — including ideas. Later, of course, Greece and Persia, fixed by the continents, took pleasure in facing each other in war, but not before they had taken each the other's measure in the contacts of peace. There the Greek, himself poor, had had his eye caught by the riches of the Orient. That a man of high intellectual gifts like Xenophon, a pupil of Socrates, could enroll himself in a band of

Greek mercenaries in the service of Cyrus and play in it the part that we all remember speaks eloquently of the incessant interaction of Greek and Asian culture. The brief reprisals of Lysander and Agesilaus were no more than the reactions of reactions.

How far the wild inhabitants of the Macedonian mountains were of Illyrian blood is a question that lies outside my province. I can say only that all Greece regarded the Macedonians as true barbarians. Consequently the Greeks excluded them from the Olympic Games until the military success of Philip enabled him to force the gates of the stadium by invoking for his dynasty a pretended origin in Argos. It may be well here to point out that in accordance with Oriental custom the succession among the forerunners of Philip was most often determined by the chances of continual murder. Finally it is significant that until the battle of Platea, Macedonia embraced the cause of Darius against Greece. The appearance of a Philip and an Alexander in a country of dim men-

tal quality, the capital of which, Pella, was not much more than a big village, can be explained only by the accidents of chance. I willingly see in those men one of those phenomena of Asiatic improvisation in which the explosive power of imagination, sustained by an energy that no cruelty could daunt, gives us a Mahmud, a Baber, a Ghengis Khan, or even—so far as the facts of his time permitted—a Mithridates. Philip seems to me to be of their race and the follies of Alexander but confirm the view. As is always and everywhere the law, the gold acquired by pillage prepares and consolidates the conquests of the sword. The triumphs of thought come later.

For the systematic perfidy that was prevalent all through Asia, Philip is forever renowned. His environment was different, the circumstances were changed, but, underlying his character was the same barbarous foundation, which can conceive of greatness only in terms of implacable brutality. What is new is that Philip, brought up as a prisoner in Thebes, felt

the charm of the Greece that he whipped and bludgeoned without pity. He brought from the schools an instinctive respect for a Greek culture, over which his 'Macedonian phalanx' would not know how to prevail. He sought seductions that would give him a moral victory over it, but in that attempt he was thwarted by Demosthenes. Even in the height of his rage Alexander seemed to fear Athens. After his criminal destruction of Thebes he was seized with an unexpected 'clemency' at the sight of *Athena Promachos*. And, since all must be said, the changeable goddess was not insensible to his homage, though it was later cheapened by that fool Poliorcetes who installed his harem in the opisthodomus of the Parthenon by way of announcing his marriage to the ravished virgin.

The intemperate Philip, whom death saved from the extravagances of his son, seems to have been a Hellenized Oriental. His dream was to subject Hellas by ruse backed with force and to make of it not only an ornament but an instrument of war against the Orient—a war that he wanted

to wage for ends that he never took the trouble to determine. And in all that he did he acted with an entire lack of definite purpose, merely—it seems—to give the world over, as we see in the case of Alexander, to the greed of a soldiery embarrassed with its conquests.

Philip's secret hope of gaining the good graces of Greece never showed more clearly than in the letter that he wrote the day after Alexander was born to ask Aristotle to become the preceptor of his son.

Philip to Aristotle, greetings!—Know that a son is born to me. That for which I thank the gods is not so much having given him to me as having caused him to be born during your lifetime. For I hope that, brought up and moulded by you, he will show himself worthy of his father and of the empire that some day he will rule.

That letter seems to me nothing less than a masterpiece of diplomacy. No one can suspect Philip of appreciating the teachings of the Stagirite, whose lessons such a pupil would soon forget. But incidentally to have proclaimed the Mace-

donian government of the *Empire*, in an act of homage to Hellenism itself in the person of the prince of philosophers, was one of those master-strokes which win hearts more quickly and surely than a battle. Every one knows what came of it.

The founding of Greek colonies in Asia Minor had long signalized the withdrawal of the Orient when the hope of making Hellas Asiatic led Darius and Xerxes, followed by innumerable soldiers, to the panics of Marathon and Salamis and to the final defeat at Platea. The barbarous Macedonian with his semi-civilized taste for perfidy, animated only by the ingenuous desire to take and to hold, found himself ready for renewed conquests, but could not attack Asia until Greece had been reduced to submission. Hellas, irreparably torn asunder by its own hands, had at that time no other rampart than 'the Athenian, conqueror of the Medes,' and in Athens no other bulwark than Demosthenes, with which to resist either the artifices or the military enterprises of the barbarian Philip, disguised as a Greek for the occasion.

Philip, who may be said to have been perfected in his son Alexander, — at once a strong man of action and an idealist, — did not rise above the ordinary soldier who makes a trade of conquest except in the craft of his words. Nations have never cheerfully followed any leaders except those who have asked them to shed their blood. Whoever maintains that there is more in the matter than that will see himself suddenly called to make his empirical proofs on the vast field of battle where all the interests and all the passions will take every chance to misrepresent the ideal — a course of action for which opportunity will never be lacking. Philip and Alexander were perhaps greater than their unachieved and unachievable military destinies. Philip's interest in flattering the Greeks is obvious, but nevertheless he must have been affected by Greece or he would not have given the education of his son into the charge of Aristotle. Macedonian darkness was lightened by the gleams of a waning Hellenism; the conqueror felt the charm of an ideal too high for him to understand and too

temptingly beautiful for him not to seize — as a child cannot resist seizing the soap-bubble, though at the risk of breaking it.

With the primary view of territorial aggrandizement Philip had conquered Illyria, Thessaly, and even Thrace, before Attica, wholly absorbed in its own intestine quarrels, felt itself threatened. The hour was near, however, when the gravest crisis of the noblest history in the world was to bring the low brutality of the sword face to face with the most exalted thought. We can confidently predict that some day intelligence will triumph; but we could have predicted just as confidently that that access of unwholesome violence would at first see the premature hope of a fragile realization of beauty succumb. Greece, prodigal of itself, dared to oppose a man to inevitable fate. That might have brought victory; it did bring the defeat of the most intelligent people in history — through their own lack of resolution.

CHAPTER III

ATHENS, the warm hearth of intellectual light, then held the world amazed with the brilliance of its thought. From Ionia westward to Great Greece, in all the meeting-places of Asia and Europe, in all the marts of the Ægæan Sea, the Hellas of all the idealisms announced, acted, talked, lived the noblest hours of the highest life that the world had ever seen. From the ancient meditations of India on the world and man—Veda, Vedanta, Sankhya, Buddhism — a great stream of intellectual tradition had spread even to the shores of the Mediterranean. Of that the correspondences between the great Indian poems and the Homeric songs convince us as surely as the Indian pillars attest the presence three hundred years before our era of Buddhistic missions established by the great Emperor Asoka even in Syria, in Egypt, and in Epirus. To the fate of that prodigious push of aggressive idealism the whole future

of the continent of Europe was even then attached.

Max Müller has observed that, were it not for the battle of Salamis, we should all be Zoroastrians. No one disputes that in the days when Greco-Roman paganism was dying, the sun god Mythra, brought from Persia by the Roman legionaries, for a while offset in the hesitating Gentile world the ardent propaganda of Saint Paul. The columns of the new god that had come from the Orient still speak in our museums. Christianity, in which so many elements of Buddhism can still be found, won the great contest as much by a noble perseverance in effort as by the superior adaptation of the Jewish heresy to the new emotional states of the time, the power of which in spite of many difficulties, was to unite and make fruitful the continent of Europe.

Persia, sunk in the sterile dissipations of its dreams, exemplified an exhausted mental effort. It lay open to all the conquerors to come. Still unknown to history, our Gallic ancestors, formerly drawn even to Delphi by the riches of Apollo, had not

yet found themselves and apparently could not make themselves count in the work of civilization. Vainly their hordes had gone to beat against the walls of the Capitol. Rome grimly awaited its day. It was destined itself to utter decadence — a state that permitted the religions of the world, all of which had assembled there, to compete for the palm of preëminence, which after terrible struggles was won by the God of Golgotha. The great symbolic progress of the torch that from the banks of the Ganges to Olympus was to transmit the sacred fire to generations worthy to carry it!

On those fateful days the eminent fortune of Greece was not only to spread the light, but to animate it with the supreme sanction of beauty. Why should all greatness have its reverse side? A marvellous instinct was to lead Hellas to assimilate the nobler parts of its rôle more easily than to translate them into the conduct of its actual life. Is it, then, easier for a people to accomplish miracles than painfully to keep up the persevering effort that will

assure their effect? The work of the world needs for its achievements bursts of imagination, but quite as insistently it requires the practical fitting of means to ends.

The Peloponnesian War, which sealed the destruction of Hellenism, had so trivial an origin that no one has ever been able to determine what it was. Not for two courtesans of Megara under the supposed authority of Aspasia was the finest blood of Hellas so profusely spilled. The simple truth is that any pretext was good enough to set the Greeks to destroying one another. Among the tribes that was the pure tradition of the Orient. Consult the memoirs of Baber, the second conqueror of India after Mahmud. The foolish strategy of Pericles, which dedicated Athens to a sterile defensive, led the city to its ruin — to the misfortune both of the conquered and of the conquerors. When Lysander demolished the Long Wall to the sound of the flute he celebrated by the action the collapse of his sacrilegious victory. That among the Thirty Tyrants there were pupils of Socrates governing Athens in the name of

Lacedæmon and striking off in the Pœcile hundreds of heads in a day truly implies too great a disorder in degraded consciences.

The truth is that these men, who had so much reason to close their ranks and to unite in consecrating themselves to the common task of liberating human intelligence, prized more than anything else the pleasure of mutual massacre. In a word, the Greeks, though so finely intellectual, had no sentiment of a common fatherland. Delphi, Olympia, the Isthmian and the Pythian Games and all the rest were enough to satisfy their need of a common frame. At the Olympic Games the young Thucydides in the opisthodomē of the temple of Zeus listened, ravished, to Herodotus reading to some dozens of listeners who had escaped from the hippodrome passages of his great history. What need was there of any other link between minds than that? The Athenian, cynically invoking the right of the strongest, adorned himself with the title of 'the conqueror of the Medes' merely to massacre the neutral Melians who had

offered him their friendship. It was too late when with Philopœmen the idea of an *Æchæan* league could at last arise: the fatal blow had already been struck. The infatuation of Rome with Polybius, prisoner of war, finally sealed the mortuary stone under which Hellenism was doomed to sleep until the Renaissance. What a punishment it was for Greece to survive in the degradation of Byzantium! Better to die than to degenerate.

Does the tremendous adventure of Greece suggest to us a judgment of the bearing of the Greek spirit on the development of a future that grows now clear and now obscures? The scholar and the philosopher have long been copious on that question. I can permit myself here only a passing beam of the searchlight. There is a curious passage bearing on the point in *Sainte-Beuve*.¹ It is a comment on the infinite modulations of the Greek tongue, and its excessive praise of them prompts the criticism that they betray a sensibility so dispersed as to be almost

¹ The article on M. Boissonade.

incompatible with any rally of concentrated energy. The famous maxim — nothing too much — applies as well to the flowering of art as to any other form of human activity. Our own *Renaissance* made us see that truth after our Hellenic *Naissance* had brought it out. Abuse of idealism, excess of barbarity. A people of æsthetes would begin building its palaces with the roof. Listen to Sainte-Beuve's outburst of admiration and consider how well, unsuspected by the author, it illustrates the fact that the armor breaks when too much refined.

To know Greek is not, as any one would think, to comprehend the sense of authors, of certain authors, in the mass, as well as we can (though even that is a good deal), and to translate them with passable accuracy. To know Greek is both the rarest and the hardest thing in the world — I can speak with authority on the point, for I have tried many times to learn it and have always failed. It is to understand not only the words, but all the forms of a language that is the most finished, the most skilled, the richest in shades of

meaning of all the languages of the world; it is to distinguish its dialects, the periods of it, to feel the tone and special accent of it—that special varying and pliant accentuation that if the reader does not comprehend he remains more or less a barbarian. It is to have a sound enough head to seize among the authors, such as a Thucydides, the play of whole groups of expressions—groups that make but one unit in the sentence, and that act and are governed like a single word. While keeping the discourse as a whole in mind, it is to enjoy every moment the continual contrasts and ingenious symmetries that oppose and balance one another in its parts. It is not to rest indifferent, either, to the intention, to the light significance, of the multitude of untranslatable but not incomprehensible particles that are sprinkled through its dialogue, and that with careless ease give it all its subtlety, its irony, and its grace. . . .

Even though we care to see in those ingenious refinements no more than a flower of Atticism, it still remains true that men who forget themselves in too subtle and skillful graces of language will not meet the shock of foreign invasion with suffi-

cient strength of effort. Life is beautiful by its songs, but there needs to be some endeavor to be sung. That is what the artistic peoples do not clearly comprehend. Too quickly comes the imperious hour that demands complete and instant sacrifice of self, without which even victory dissolves in a continual series of regressions. Devotion in its fullness requires a robust soul in a robust body; otherwise the gift of the best of self is incomplete, marred by relaxations of energy. The most poignant pain that renouncing life inflicts is having to cast into the unfathomable gulf of the infinite the high aspirations that give to existence its fleeting nobility. Let our last joy be a supreme detachment — an achievement not beyond the reach of our highest efforts.

Thus understood, the Greek 'miracle' of Renan seems — especially in the case of the man of Attica — to be a certain subtle, aërial ideality and the quick accesses of energy that, as at Marathon, Salamis, and Platea, produce the thunder-claps of history. Alas, since those bursts of energy

were *sudden*, they were but short-lived. The Peloponnesian War with its incoherences, and the hesitating resistance to the aggression of Macedon, ending each in the fall of Athens, reveal the inadequate persistence of the Greek, the civilizer. Since that time history has shown that the fate of the conquered and the fate of the conqueror are secretly bound together. Virgil promised the dominion of the world to the Roman people, whose idealism was of an ordered force, yet in the end Rome fell a victim to its endless victories. We may believe that the same fate would not have befallen Athens had it known how to unite with its achievement in height the downright miracle of a like progress in breadth.

When the mental qualities of a fatigued Asia and of an uncertain Europe were first amalgamated, Greece *thought* the future of humanity, and thus — at the cost of what trials! — came to determine it. It gave the best of itself for victories which it was never to know, but of which the mystic honor is credited to it in the eyes of posterity. Its victories and its defeats are still

profoundly mingled, but the struggle between our weakness and our strength will some day perhaps determine the issue. It was at the hour when the savage contest between Macedonia and Athens was joined that the man of sovereign power arose — a man in whom speech and action were to become identical, with the result that he bequeathed to us the eventual victory, which never comes except through an obstinate adherence to settled resolutions.

I sketch the scene before describing the personages. I emphasize the important tendencies of the *milieu* in order the better to interpret the response of the man Demosthenes to them. The anarchy of those Greek tribes which were half Asiatic in their ideas and almost always at war did not permit them to recognize the advantages of a Hellenic reconciliation. A Pan-Hellenic Zeus was an aspiration. Perceiving more or less vaguely a remote ideal and guiding its contradictory tendencies by opposing the impulse toward atavism to the impulse toward progress is the base of human history. The Nazarene preached

love exclusively. Yet as a result of quarrels over heresies what massacres followed among Christians in the name of the common God of universal charity!

In the light of those reflections the capital rôle of the Athenian Demosthenes in the development of Hellenic civilization stands plainly revealed — a rôle that threw him into the very midst of the frightful struggle and that required him at every moment to hold in hand his fickle city if he were to conquer at one and the same time the soldiers of his own cause and the soldiers of the enemy. The general failure of heroism and even of simple will power has been in all ages an ordinary happening. It is owing as often to the incompetence of the leaders as to the weakness of the crowd, which is always more inclined to follow him who flatters its hereditary instincts than him who asks it to suffer for an ideal beyond its capacity. I do not see that there is in that any occasion for surprise. It is an effect of the same laws that makes the stone fall and the bird rise.

The personal reactions of the individual,

concentrated as they are in the depths of his own being, permit him methodically to coördinate his own efforts far better than the over-excited crowd, for any crowd can reach a general agreement only when all its weaknesses have made reciprocal concessions and when, consequently, the springs both of intelligence and of will have been broken. However valuable an assembly may be for necessary control, it can never make the discoveries of a Copernicus, a Galileo, a Newton, or a Pasteur. Athens wanted, as best it could, to follow Demosthenes. In a day of enthusiasm the crowd in the Pnyx could accept the risks of a dangerous course. But a steady view and a lasting resolution are what it was hazardous to expect of the proverbial levity of the Athenian people. To talk of liberty, of independence, even of the fatherland, is a different thing from acquiring that often severe interior discipline which noble causes, so much easier to applaud than to achieve, demand in the way of disinterested service.

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concentrated as they are in the depths of his own being, permit him methodically to coördinate his own efforts far better than the over-excited crowd, for any crowd can reach a general agreement only when all its weaknesses have made reciprocal concessions and when, consequently, the springs both of intelligence and of will have been broken. However valuable an assembly may be for necessary control, it can never make the discoveries of a Copernicus, a Galileo, a Newton, or a Pasteur. Athens wanted, as best it could, to follow Demosthenes. In a day of enthusiasm the crowd in the Pnyx could accept the risks of a dangerous course. But a steady view and a lasting resolution are what it was hazardous to expect of the proverbial levity of the Athenian people. To talk of liberty, of independence, even of the fatherland, is a different thing from acquiring that often severe interior discipline which noble causes, so much easier to applaud than to achieve, demand in the way of disinterested service.

We need not go back to Athens to get a

lifelike impression of the contrast between those two states of human activity. From the vibrant sonorities of speech to the rude labors of disciplined action there is ample margin to wander over. How many brave leaps have landed horse and rider in the ditch! Under the hard law of Rome, Greece, pillaged, over-taxed, wasted, had to endure the methodical brigandage of an unchecked soldiery as a prelude to the pious devastations of the Christians. The ruin of Athenian idealism was definitely accomplished. There remained the woe of its tremendous fall—its punishment for having proclaimed its ambition to attain the highest reaches of thought before it had tested its wings.

To Demosthenes has fallen the glory of having felt, understood, willed, and acted. Therein lie great lessons that are often missed. But the Greeks found it easier to acclaim the orator than invincibly to dedicate themselves to the fearful uncertainties of the noblest cause. Saved, the Greek nation, big with the highest ideal of intellectual man, had perhaps liberated our race

from centuries of misery during which human culture almost perished. Could any one live, could any one die, for a more beautiful end? Should there ultimately remain nothing except the nobility of the effort, could any one bequeath to his country a more magnificent fame?

In the domain of ideas a victorious Athens would have been the great home of our civilization — a fact that Demosthenes strongly believed throughout his struggle against a barbarism only superficially polished. But Athens, city of idealism, could not triumph over heterogeneous crowds except through the close union of an Hellenic fatherland made to recognize the realities of its situation. A densely ignorant ideology has complacently proclaimed in our incoherent Europe that Nature recognizes no fatherlands. A man might as well assert that Nature produces organisms *in vacuo*, that, for example, the cell can dispense with the plasma. In the constantly increasing complexities of social organization, the family constitutes the immediate environ-

ment of the individual just as the fatherland constitutes the larger environment in which gregarious man is evolved through reciprocal reactions that correspond to more and more elevated needs. The animal herd is a defensive organization that springs from the conditions for which it needs to provide; it is an elementary, peripatetic fatherland that shifts its position at every moment. The mental evolution of man has other requirements. The complexity of a social environment that has become fixed increases with the mental complexity of its individual organisms. No organism can live except in a suitable environment, nor can it develop there except through mutual assimilation. *‘No man carries his country on the soles of his shoes.’*

The fatherland is the living frame of the thoughts and the emotional impulses of every kind that besiege us from birth to death. From it we derive a synthetic education of our organically related sensibilities, the sum of which we should like to leave with some increase to our poster-

ity. *'Oh, the song of the brook that knew me when I was small!'* sighs a Chinese poem. Through the fatherland we take rank in an idealistic development that adds to our importance in our own eyes and that carries us forward to higher achievements, original manifestations of our own individuality. The country makes the citizen in the degree that it can establish him in harmonious human groups, groups that will be all the finer as men become more intelligent. To ennoble such a confederation of thinking beings there is no other way than to bring it to increase in disinterestedness. The reactions between nation and nation form the stuff from which is made the developments of our history, and to meet them we need, not a dust of scattered individuals, but citizens bound together by common moral ideals. Like individuals, nations have their lives to safeguard and to make profitable use of in all the social organizations that provide meeting-places where the likes and dislikes of men arrive at adjustment.

Well! the power of national cohesion

the Greece of triumphant individual intellects never knew and never wished to know. The remark holds in spite of the Achæan League, of which Greece did not think until after all the aspirations that would have given it life had been destroyed. The tradition of social unity was not in the baggage of Asia, which was content to find in extravagant dreams a silent refuge against the abuse of force. Greece expected of the future only the virtuositities of here and there an exceptional mind, for it did not foresee the great evolution that one of its own citizens had begun. Herodotus opened the door of a splendid future—a future in which the general beliefs of diverse races were step by step ultimately to meet and mingle.

However, to the cost of the Hellenic world, which was unconscious of its power, the great Roman nation was preparing, bound like Philip and Alexander toward endless conquests that would condemn it, as Greece was condemned, to the dissolution of complete Asiatic decadence. To serve the fatherland on the field of bat-

tle is not enough. The Greeks and the Romans were as warlike as any people in the world, yet they finally reached the same failure. < The harder problem for a nation to solve is to show itself capable of holding methodically — even sometimes against its inclination — to a discipline of peace made of constraints, whether spontaneous or imposed, for the sake of a social development beneficial to all and to each — in other words, a social organization that will work with a view to a progress proportionate to the average value of the contributions of the individuals who compose it. > In that respect Greece and Rome in their different ways deplorably failed. What fate does the future reserve for us? There will be days for hope. Let us strive to prolong them. Doubtless leaders will be needed, but peoples will be needed also. < Hellas produced a most marvellous group of great human personalities. The national coherence that could assure their full yield was lacking. Therein lies a great lesson that we have missed too long. >

CHAPTER IV

IN the Macedonian prelude to the cruel tragedy of Greece fate placed Demosthenes to endure the first onslaughts of a conqueror who, under a thin varnish of Hellenic culture, poorly concealed a blind thirst of conquest, no matter at what cost of blood. Regarded by all Greece as a barbarian, he was nevertheless so compounded of trickery that he reminds us of Ulysses, the Greek *par excellence*, whose maternal grandfather, Autolycus, is celebrated by Homer for the extent of his rapine and the number of his false oaths. But Alexander, wholly a slave to the seductions of Asia, has cast the characteristic figure of his father into the shade.

No one will expect from me a detailed biography of the Athenian orator any more than he will expect an historical account in the style of the handbooks. It is enough for me if I succeed in so characterizing the personages as to make salient the general features of a prodigious romance of war —

a war that for the Occident resulted in the school at Alexandria and for India in the Greco-Buddhist sculptures of Gandhara made by the Bactrian colonists of Alexander.¹

Philip and Demosthenes were the two antagonists whose success or defeat was to determine the hesitating course of history. A drama of the sword against the idealism of the human conscience as expressed through the medium of a people of elevated thought but of vacillating action. They were two unflinching antagonists worthy to confront each other under the sky of heaven ! They were material for an epic that should set them in opposition as symbolic representatives of man contending against himself for the apotheosis or the ruin of his own destiny.

Philip, dissolute after the fashion of Asia, but stubborn and persevering, was one of those fighting men of genius whom no scruple hinders, whom no obstacle turns from their path. He was a man of

¹ See the museums of India, without forgetting the city of Takshila, capital of the friend of Alexander and to-day brought to light.

understanding mind, perhaps, since he was touched with Greek culture, but imperturbably resolute and, as it were, always coiled for action. In spite of having listened vaguely to Aristotle, Alexander himself remained wholly at the mercy of his contradictory impulses. Is not a break in the mental balance needed to let loose the energies required for action? Discussion of the correct measure of that phenomenon will never end. Perfidies, betrayals, bold military strokes, corruption in all its forms — none of the methods that are the ordinary money of the trade of conqueror — were unknown to Philip. ‘*No citadel is impregnable,*’ he liked to say, ‘*if you can drive a mule laden with gold into it.*’ He had no more illusions about other people than he had about himself. The real problem for men is how to support one another so that all may rise in common; his aim was to debase men and to dominate them. He sought to produce a general moral decay that could have no possible relation to any resolute progress toward the ideal.

Beyond all that, he had the unbounded courage of a soldier drunk with deeds of war. *‘He had an eye destroyed, a shoulder crushed, a thigh and a hand transpierced; he threw to fortune everything indeed that it demanded of him and asked in return only that with what remained he might live renowned and powerful.’* Demosthenes himself pays that tribute to Philip, and if we may believe Lucian, Philip himself was just as prompt emphatically to honor his mortal enemy. Antipater himself testifies to the fact, — that very Antipater who after Cranon sent his soldiers to seize Demosthenes, but who did not, it seems, recommend him to their good will. It is easier to do justice to a dead enemy than to celebrate the virtues of that same enemy when he advances lance in hand. Lucian shows us not so much Demosthenes as Antipater in all the pomposity of his rôle:

The oratorical gift of Demosthenes won only the second place in my esteem. I saw in his talent no more than an instrument. It was Demosthenes himself that I never ceased to admire. It was his great-

ness of soul, his prudence, the inflexible firmness of his character that in the storms of fortune held to the line it had traced and yielded to no reverses.

Calling upon his memories, Antipater, always according to Lucian's account, shows us Philip himself defending Demosthenes against the invectives of Parmenion:

Demosthenes is the only man whose name is not inscribed in my expense book. On him who bursts out in wrath against me in defense of his country I declare war. I attack him as I should attack a citadel, a rampart, an arsenal, an entrenchment, but I admire his virtue, and I envy the good fortune of a city that has such a citizen. . . . If that one man, Demosthenes, were not in Athens, I could take the city with more ease than I found in overcoming the Thessalians and the Thebans. Ruse, force, surprise and money would soon open the gates to me. But this man, though alone, stands guard over his country. Always ready to seize any favorable occasion, he follows all my undertakings and sets them in their true light. He faces my armies. . . . He is the obstacle that stops us, he is the rampart that covers

Greece and that keeps me from conquering the whole of it in a single campaign. . . . His fellow citizens who sleep as if drugged with mandragora, he awakens in spite of themselves. Far from seeking to flatter them, he seems—so freely does he reproach them—to use sword and fire to draw them from their apathy. He changes the destination of the public moneys so that the revenue consecrated to the public spectacles is applied to the maintenance of the armies. He sets the navy afloat again. . . . He reanimates the failing courage of the Athenians by reminding them of Marathon and Salamis. He forms alliances and confederations among all the Greeks and incites them to league themselves against us. No one can escape his vigilance, no one can mislead him by any subterfuge, and no one can buy him. What Themistocles and Pericles formerly were to the Athenians, Demosthenes is to them now. . . . It is by listening to him that they have made themselves masters of Eubœa, Megara, the shores of the Hellespont and Bœotia. Should the Athenians make such a man absolute master of munitions, ships, money, and circumstances, I should fear that he would soon put me in danger of having to defend Macedonia against him

—him who, though to-day he can fight me only with decrees, yet encompasses me on every side, takes me by surprise, finds pecuniary resources, reassembles the armies, enrolls troops, and travels everywhere to oppose my designs.

What could any one else say to equal such testimony from the man qualified above all others to judge the hero? Here in the sharp relief of a natural force in full activity the good soldier is presented to us by the very antagonist whose authority is final, since he is capable of judgment on a high plane. After that what matters the technique of the methods of Demosthenes? It is the man that we seek, it is the man that we find with his passions and his battle roars across the cool decisions of a composed mind. The history of Hellenism has no finer pages than those in which the two antagonists, like the heroes of Homer, pause in the heat of the battle to honor each other—each great through having given himself wholly to the service of an ideal that sweeps him on and breaks him in human suffering.

That the people of Athens should bestow a crown on Pausanias, the assassin of Philip, and that even Demosthenes, in spite of the recent death of his daughter, should, on the arrival of the news, show himself crowned with flowers, testify to a lack of serenity. The passion of combat, and above all the nature of the stake supply an adequate excuse. Philip risked nothing except his person; Demosthenes risked the capital of Hellenism and with it the most hopeful chances of a civilization that he had glimpsed.

The disadvantage of the Athenian was finding himself compelled day after day to convince the crowd before he could act, whereas the Macedonian, sovereign judge, could simultaneously decide and carry out his decision. The men round Demosthenes 'could in the last resort command him; the men round Philip were there to obey him at every moment. The Pnyx under the eye of the goddess whose lance threw its lightnings even to Acro-Corinthus was perpetually boiling like a crater. In it gathered an audience agitated by all the

passions good or bad, ready for any change of front, likely at any moment to rise in the highest flights or to sink in the lowest surrenders. Its ardor had always to be rekindled as soon as it was lit. There were all the enthusiasms and there, too, under the immense sore of venality, were all the perfidies. There were all the devotions, all the suspicions, all the angers, through which the task was to attain the equilibrium of reason. Have we not at the height of the Peloponnesian War seen Cleon, the demagogue, whom Aristophanes had riddled with his shafts, throw himself into the management of the war, in which the best generals had failed, capture Sphacteria and crown his career with death on the field of battle? With such associates there is only one method that will serve—to keep in the hottest of the fight and to face in every direction at once. Demosthenes knew those agonies; Demosthenes knew those joys.

From the crags of Macedonia had come an iron race to which the civilization of the plains offered too great a temptation. A chief fit for command had found soldiers

fit to obey. A stroke of military genius had brought forth the invincible phalanx. Idealism would perhaps have its day; at the moment it was for the sword to decide. Whether attacked with treachery or with force, Demosthenes, standing alone, would face the enemy everywhere and always, though assailed in front or from behind, though calumniated, accused, betrayed, conquered, and condemned. And, besides, how many of his followers there were who would seek to win the favor of the enemy in case of accident! They had too quickly recognized that there was only one argument that availed—the will of the strongest.

An Athenian and an orator, Demosthenes put all his hope in the power of his eloquence, for his eloquence was himself. Unlike Æschines he was not born with superior oratorical gifts. He had perhaps a technique. He did not let it show. The strength that with a high hand carried him to victory over all others lay in the unshakable resolution of a conscience that willed and acted because it believed. Athens also

wished to believe, but it was too inconstant and above all too much in love with the rhythms and sonorities of speech not to surrender to them on every occasion. It was typically a city, in that the inhabitants, though ambitious to think clearly of life, merely talked of it. The long-haired Ionians flocked there to listen to the soft cooings of philosophy. From the Acropolis to the gardens of the Academia, even to the bed of the Ilissus, it was a festival of words, in which all the artists of the chanted life placed the fondest of their pleasures. On one of those moonlight nights that shame the day you can hear even now enlivening the public square an unobtrusive murmur of the voices of men talking solely for the pleasure of hearing a modulated harmony like that of a brook singing to the pebbles of its shore. For your Athenians even of to-day have no greater joy than passing the night in a game of fluent words that create — or destroy — the irresolutions of yesterday and of to-morrow. They are virtuosos of the spoken word, more lavish of adornment than rich in thought.

Demos permitted the forms of public authority if for no other reason, then for the pleasure of later assigning the responsibility. The decisions were left to the hazard of any crowd that chance collected. The natural meeting-place was the market, the *Agora*. The Greek is the model of sobriety. From time to time, he cuts up a lamb, has it roasted, and eats it even on the sidewalks of Athens, as I have seen him do with my own eyes. Most often he lives on olives, or onions, or figs, or, more simply still, on those boiled herbs that the mother of Euripides used to vend. A big glass of water lends its charm to the feast, the pleasure of which is heightened by the music of various talk. In the earliest days the great business of the market-place became by insensible degrees less the purchase of supplies than the exchange of views on any and every topic. Since business and the affairs of the city afforded ample themes, the public square became the daily center of debate. Later, when the texts of resolves were found to be required, the assembly was transferred to the esplanade

of the ancient altar of Zeus under the open sky, and the new gathering-place became known as the Pnyx.¹ But the indifferent Athenians obstinately stayed in the market-place. Then the Scythian archers intervened. They drew round the crowd a cord, freshly tinted with red and ran to the Pnyx. The sovereign people were obliged to follow them, for whoever bore the red mark of the cord exposing his negligence found himself deprived of the three oboli, the reward of ordinary devotion to the public business. If it happened that the different kinds of bartering pursued one another into the august assembly, they perhaps did no more than follow the spirit of commerce.

Such was the uncertain instrument that Demosthenes had to use — an instrument always likely to break in his hand. The *tyranny* and the *oligarchy* of the ancient social structure taught resistance to the

¹ Etymologically the word signifies density, the crowding of the assembled people. The made ground, supported by a cyclopean stone wall, shows that the spot was set apart expressly as a place of assemblage. Athens had approximately 40,000 inhabitants. The Pnyx never saw more than 10,000 of them together at any one time.

vagrant wishes of crowds always eager for change. The *democracy* of Athens, inclined to the vain verbal agitations that characterize apathy, delighted in every contradiction. I greatly fear that Aristophanes has not overdrawn goodman *Demos*, victim himself of the worst popular oligarchies, beyond the point that the optics of the stage demand. When *Demos* felt disposed, he was a good soldier, — Marathon and Salamis make that plain, — especially when he was aided by the panics peculiar to the military improvisations of the ostentatious monarchs of the Orient. When Herodotus, seeking to dazzle us with the number of the invaders, tells us that the soldiers of Xerxes drank the rivers dry in passing, we must set down a part to imagination. The 172 Athenians buried in the subsisting knoll of Marathon invite us to distinguish between legend and history, too often confounded. Nevertheless the fact remains that the Medes twice had fled before Athens, to which reverts the honor of having saved in those days the chance of our civilization.

The Athenian, even in the frightful dis-

asters of Sicily, showed himself sometimes a man of the most remarkable endurance. He stoically suffered the cruel trial of the quarries. But the fatherland needs to be served no less courageously in peace than in war, and if peace made the delights of the Agora, the theater and the Academy to flourish, it demanded more than anything else a laborious outlay of civic virtue, which is less common than the act of heroism that sends a soldier to his death. It is easier for a man to give his life — that is, to make a total sacrifice of himself at a single stroke — than it is for him to show his devotion in the obscurity of peace by stiffening his character and by practicing a painful self-control, the reward of which will most often be but outrage and calumny.

No, for a people to have shown the highest courage in war is not enough. The social life of peace still requires manifestations of heroism of the highest value, since they involve continuous, inglorious effort in all fields of individual and community life, whereas war is content with a total sac-

rifice made in a lightning flash of will. In the sad ardor of their great historic wars all the nations have had sudden accessions of the fighting spirit. At such times the emotional reactions of war call forth those overflows of energy of which man has made the tissue of history — to the detriment of those continuous efforts which are the obscure woof of peaceful progress.

As Bernhardt has candidly admitted, war and peace, when directed toward the same end, do not differ except in their methods. If we ought to hope that the progress of time will bring longer periods of peace than of war, the bad prospects of a staggering nation can but grow worse so long as it fails to change, to transfuse, the tumultuous energies of war into the regulated energies of peace. The moment of military victory is a moment that we must know how to seize if we are to establish and continue it in time of peace. If for any reason the necessary coördinations are not made, the advantage of a day cannot be followed up — however loudly it may have been acclaimed. The dead will

have bequeathed to the living a task that they will find themselves unfit to accomplish. The history of Athens has proved that truth only too clearly.

In all times and in all lands there have been, and there always will be, both good and bad servants of the nation. But if to its own cost the great body of ordinary, irresolute citizens lets itself be overwhelmed in the rush of the least intelligent class against the scattered men of high energy whose union would ensure the safety of the ideal — that, indeed, is the worst misfortune. The difficulty is to habituate men of insufficient moral culture to the present sacrifices on which future freedom depends. Demosthenes, had he been a professional orator, flattering the crowds and dealing circumspectly with the strong, would have lived and enjoyed the esteem of those who delivered him to the soldiers of Antipater. But he willed; he dared. He saved Athens from the ‘defeatist’ shame. Calumny and death are among the rewards at which great minds have not the weakness to be astonished. Disastrous victory of the weak,

always pliant to the circumstances of the day, who fear nothing so much as the fatigue of willing even before making any actual effort! The coalitions of cowardice of every kind that openly opposed Demosthenes among the following of Phocion, or that, hiding behind Æschines and his band, hypocritically opposed him, were sure to win the assent of the public to whatever chanced to appeal to its momentary emotions. The evil of democracies is that they are quicker to respond to seductive formulas than to facts. Athens needed to exert continuous effort if it were to remain independent. It lacked nothing except persistence of will.

Those addicted to simplification have been unable to see in Demosthenes anything except his eloquence. Æschines, however, equaled him in art if he did not excel him. For action the crowd whose self-confidence has been destroyed by its own numerous blunders wants to put its trust less in a talker than in a man who is truly a man. Athens in its best days felt that in the *monster* denounced by Æschines

it had found such a man. Who knows but that the highest oratorical power comes from abjuring rhetoric? Not by the art of a discourse should we gauge its effectiveness. The orator holds his audience less by the actual logical value of his arguments — a quality reserved for the pleasure of commentators — than by conveying the impression that he is giving himself heart and soul to the conflict.

The good arrow from the good bow requires the archer to aim high. Nevertheless, he who wishes above all to carry the vote of an assembly should make up his mind not to care too much for the logic of the argument. On that condition, the crowd will sometimes surrender for a day, especially if it feels that the orator who presents himself to it has begun by giving himself. The skillful ordering of arguments, the cadences of periods, the dignity and sobriety of gesture, the harmony of the thought, the effect of a voice well modulated even to the final outburst — all those resources of the skilled artist make his speech admired, but are not enough to



ÆSCHINES

The statue in the Naples Museum

inflame the crowd at hours of supreme danger. / He who seeks to convince must first be convinced himself. / For him to captivate the intelligence of his listeners is not enough; he fails if he does not cause in them the leap of emotion that carries away the heart. To move so many men who are either indifferent or hostile requires a speaker to pour forth the very depths of his soul. The man gives himself, he is accepted. He leaps forward, he is followed — until the test of the event. Demosthenes gave himself to Athens; Æschines, above all a rhetorician, was in the service of Philip. Demosthenes, whose eloquence had the mass and power of a pile-driver, affected his hearers like an irresistible force, whereas Æschines, the ingenious, merely uttered arguments. The ‘Oration on the Crown’ brought Demosthenes for a day to the heights of apotheosis, whereas Æschines, wounded and bleeding, had to hide himself at Rhodes or at Samos.

At the side of Æschines stood Phocion, an honest citizen, an intrepid general, but an obstinate ‘defeatist.’ Through sheer

incapacity to understand any other ideal than that of living at any price, he sought the welfare of his country in the public weakness. Last remnant of a fallen oligarchy, Phocion had no greater pleasure than expressing his contempt to the crowd, which nevertheless never tired of appointing him general without asking his leave. Eloquent, incorruptible, incapable of ideals, and inadequate in action, he was for Demosthenes the 'implacable critic of every hour, 'the axe that pruned away his periods.' After a long life of inconsistent activities, he met the hour of the hemlock with mocking serenity.

The fate of Demosthenes was to unite against himself, in addition to the efforts of such redoubtable enemies, the violence of a degenerate aristocracy and the suspicion of that very democracy which his task was to arouse in spite of the gold and the intrigues of Philip. Now inflamed with a high zeal for the public interest, now resigned to the degradations of slavery, the crowd wasted its efforts hour after hour — incapable of holding to any reso-

lution. And to cap all, the oracle turned traitor: ‘*The Pythoness Philipizes.*’ Even the gods let themselves be drawn into the fight against Demosthenes. So be it then. Against the very gods he would sustain the effort of the day.

CHAPTER V

THE forces face each other. Now for the action. The action itself need not be here recounted, for every one knows both the principal incidents and the outcome. Nevertheless, when we try to catch the characteristic traits of such personages in the full flood of the passion that animates them, we shall find that their springs of action appear in highest relief in the very heart of the act itself. Demosthenes was about to oppose Philip, Alexander, Antipater. But to make his attack he needed not only the soldiers of Athens but of all the allies that he could rally to his side. He went even as far as Persia to seek financial aid, for the Great King had only too much reason to fear the ambition of the Macedonian. If Demosthenes could maintain the courage of the citizens in the Agora under the hue and cry of the agents of Philip, if he could keep the people of Athens in the bonds of a settled determination, if he could hold them to an effort

proportionate to their abilities, he would have nothing else to do except administer the public finances, organize the military forces by land and sea, and act as diplomat and even as common soldier — not to mention spending his own money for repairing the ramparts. In return for which he would have to endure fine, prison, exile, and in the end recall and death in irreparable defeat.

What would be the point of a narrative in which there is such a confusion of adventures? With what weights can we measure at every moment the incidents of the time, the play of the unexpected? The drama thus is brought back to the development of character in the actors, identified each with the cause to which he has vowed his life. Napoleon disdainfully observed that, compared with his own, the battles of the American war for independence were no more than skirmishes of an advance guard. He could not foresee that our modern wars would engage fighting troops in numbers beside which the numbers of his own armies would in their turn sink into insignifi-

cance. Let us guard ourselves against the egregious fault of measuring human effort by numbers. Marathon and Salamis have, precisely, made us see how worthless in the balance of forces are military crowds when an irreducible enthusiasm for an ideal awakes the whole man to absolute devotion. Organization, discipline, strategy most often determine success, but the simple power of an ideal has its day also. Even the enemy feels the repercussion of it. Goethe noted that truth when he declared on the field of battle that Valmy would mark a new era for humanity, because he had seen the veterans of Frederick recoil before the cannonade of a troop of volunteers. In the same way at Cranon the Athenians, whose moral vigor was exhausted, were defeated even in advance of the simulacrum of a battle in which they engaged, it seems, merely as a matter of form.

However, both in war and in peace the same arrays of strength and weakness will continue to face each other in order to test their comparative energy, tests in

which constancy of effort will finally carry the day. A conqueror who leads his battalions to successive encounters with incoherent forces will ultimately be shattered against the accumulating strength of passive resistance. That fate befell Alexander in India and Napoleon in Russia. Through all human fluctuations, the ideal will win in the end, but it needs always to be supported by the united will of the nation, and that is a function of individual values.

At the time when the lack of cohesion in the development of Ionian Hellenism had brought loquacious Athens into collision with Macedonia, any pretext, no matter how futile, was enough for resorting to arms. I have already noted that avowable causes for the Peloponnesian War cannot be found by history. The fundamental causes of the Macedonian wars — which from the Ganges to the Nile were destined to overthrow all the ancient homes of civilization — in the same way escape the closest analysis.

The Phocians had cultivated a field con-

secrated to Apollo. The offense does not seem especially grave. Yet it needed only that furrow of the Phocian plow to annihilate Crissa and to let loose destruction on the civilized world, for Philip, crazy for conquest, had already taken the measure of the Athenian obstacle. The Amphictyonic Council of Delphi proved the best instrument for provoking war. Irony even willed that Philip should become president of it. The Amphictyonic Council was a sort of religious confederation for keeping the peace in the neighborhood of the god. Such organizations, imported, as it seems, by the ancient peoples who began the earliest civilization of Greece, had been numerous in the old days. Of them all, the one that sat alternately at Thermopylæ and at Delphi was the last survivor. Though it was an arbitral court intended to preserve the peace, it became in the hands of Philip an instrument of war. Two *holy wars* fought for purely human ends! Since the logic of the pretext was a matter of indifference, the die was cast. The question was between

war and Hellenic civilization then seeking means to realize itself.

On the intestinal wars of Greece I believe we must give up the effort to shed any clear light. The cities, changing allies and enemies from hour to hour, sought nothing but battles. After they had been brought to disaster by their tyrants, their oligarchs, or their orators in turn, each one of them found that the best way to make an accounting was to pass from one battle to another without too much thought about the logical connection of events. The uncontrollable inconstancy of the public mind permitted the Greeks to throw themselves with no transition from the heights of heroism down to depths in which the finest bursts of virility were extinguished.

Incomparable in the domain of thought, the life of the Orient lent itself to all the violences of war through the total lack of any idea of coördinate action. Heir to such gifts, the Greek, in contact with 'barbarians,' found war easier than peace and truly found nothing to enjoy in his spells of rest

except the music of speech. The morality of it was not without flaw. The Greeks were too intelligent to be wholly content with the mere words in which their imaginations delighted. That is why all the inconsistencies went on harmoniously together without any one's taking the trouble to think about the matter. In the theater Aristophanes lampooned the gods with impunity, yet Socrates paid with the hemlock the crime of having forgotten them.

Now and again in the cities — caldrons, full of the ideal and of the basely turbulent, to which all the sorcerers had brought their spells — a man would rise who showed an energy beyond his times, occasionally beyond himself, and who marked his city with the stamp of his passage. In the endless struggle for hegemony Thebes recognized itself in Epaminondas, Sparta in Lysander, Athens in Pericles. For Hellas itself at the tragic hour when its supreme aspirations were to die from its impotency to act, the man of destiny appeared in Demosthenes, who felt, who lived, who willed Hellas more than any other Hellene, and

who would have saved it had it been willing. Later, at Rome the discipline of will was revived — for what a succession of failures and recommencements!

That quality of high impulsions which gives the idea its effective value was precisely the quality that characterized Demosthenes and that, in setting him in opposition to his Laodicean fellow citizens, put the seal of tragedy on his fate. All the deep-seated strength of his character, source of his public activities, was in constant revolt against the instinctive inclinations of his fellow citizens. He watched when, in order to forget themselves at the festivals or in the theaters, they put from their minds the enemy lying in wait. He watched, he denounced their indolence, he shamed them for allying such fine words with so many failures — those men who were always ready to stake everything on the hypothetical effort of the morrow in order to avoid the urgent effort of to-day. He had to answer *Æschines*, always resourceful; *Phocion*, a relentless mocker; *Eubulus*, an honest bourgeois who was

pompously feeble, and who for that very reason was generally esteemed; Demades, who had incomparable oratorical fire, and the versatile Philocrates; and if by good luck the powerful orator carried the vote to-day, he must to-morrow begin all over again. If he won his cause, it was in vain unless the decree were immediately put into effect, and for that task who else was there but the man who had caused it to be passed? Then fell on him the executive labor in all its complexity, with all its twists and turns, labor that he had to do in spite of apathy or ill-will often produced by corruption and brought to act in harmony with the maneuvers of an enemy whose special art it was to unite all the ruses of peace with all the surprises of war. From the first day of the struggle to the last, Demosthenes was everywhere, saw everything, saw to everything, managed everything except on the field of battle. There he could not make good the inadequacy of the generals, especially since the best of them all was ever recommending surrender at discretion.

Even before Philip had begun to reveal his full stature, Demosthenes, who already had a vision of concentrating the forces of Hellas against a devined invader, prevented the Athenians from undertaking a foolish expedition against Persia that would have left Athens exposed to the first conqueror. In the violent disputes between the Spartans and the Thebans over the possession of Megalopolis, the capital of Arcadia, he not only refused to take part against the Thebans, thinking that some day he might have need of them, but with the same idea kept up the alliance with Sparta, the ancient enemy. His thought is clear: *‘Never leave the feeble at the mercy of the strong.’* And in the incident of the Rhodians: *‘I am astonished that any one of you can fail to reflect that, if Chios, Mytilene, Rhodes, and nearly all Greece bows to the yoke, our own government is in peril.’* The language is all the more significant since the struggle against Philip was still at its beginnings. The first Philippic had been spoken scarcely a year before, and in the mind of Demosthenes

the plan to group all the forces of Greece under the moral and military hegemony of the goddess Athena was becoming more sharply defined.

Unable to control himself longer, the King of Macedonia had methodically ravaged Thrace, subdued the cities and engaged in an interminable quarrel with Athens over Amphipolis, which he seized. He lavished assurances of friendship, but, as soon as they were uttered, he took the occasion of the Holy War to intervene in the affairs of Greece by declaring himself against the 'sacrilegious' Phocians who had permitted themselves to sow the field of Apollo. He took in hand the cause of the Amphictyons — an action scarcely less dangerous for that august assembly than a direct attack. The Amphictyonic Council was, as I have said, one of the most ancient institutions of Greece, a sort of federal bond among the first Hellenizing peoples, who were venturesomely disposed to group and organize themselves in a loose union that the individualistic Greeks, with an eye to escaping their ob-

ligations in the moment of danger, did not wish too rigorous. Under the empire of such sentiments all sense of a common duty too soon faded away. Only the stage-setting remained; the Amphictyonic Council of Delphi, like the fallen rock that emerges from the sea, showed how the ancient cliff had suffered. It bothered no one. It was spoken of with all the more respect because it was an old thing that was no longer used. It was an honor to be a *pylagore*, or deputy, to the Council and as such permitted to frequent the god. The Greeks talked there a good deal and, since they were Greeks, did nothing.

For Philip, seeking a pretext to leap back on Greece, there could have been no better springboard. Behold him, then, 'in the service' of the Amphictyonic Council because of his horror of the sacrilege committed by the Phocians. In a 'pacific' association of powers nothing is more certain than that the soldier will have the last word. Piously and conscientiously, then, Philip ravaged Phocis and, absent-mindedly mistaking his way, wandered

even as far as Thermopylæ. There, however, the mere presence of an Athenian troop under the command of Nausicles was enough to stop him. The match was postponed. Nevertheless, it was a beginning. Among other virtues proper to a ruler, the shrewd Macedonian had that of knowing how to wait. For years at his capital Pella he forgot himself, or seemed to forget himself, after the Oriental manner in sports, in festivals, and in debauchery. Whoever wished to deceive himself was free to do so. Perhaps Philip was unjustly suspected, perhaps he was still no more than a very ambitious man who was content to win notoriety in conquest and even in idleness. Demosthenes, however, and some others with him, saw the man with clear eyes. But if Demosthenes was not alone in comprehending the conqueror, he was the first to denounce his schemes. The Philippic launched its thunders and the invader was unmasked.

Disputed between Athens and Thebes, Eubœa was a subject of dissension in which Philip pretended to have an interest. Eu-

bulus proposed an expedition that seemed easy, but that Demosthenes, in spite of the outcry the crowd roused against him, opposed. Phocion, surrounded near Eretria, broke loose with difficulty, but Eubœa was lost. Demosthenes fought through the campaign under Phocion so that no one could say he had yielded to fear in opposing the foolish enterprise. Nothing better characterizes the Athenian mind than the law proposed by Eubulus — *and voted — punishing with death whoever should dare to demand that the money set aside for festivals should be used to defray the expenses of war.* Is not that enactment eloquent enough? It was the duty of Demosthenes to risk all to save all on the occasion of the succor asked by Olynthus against Philip, and to have the money prodigally spent for banquets turned back into the public treasury.

You have orators who go and come among you, asking, ‘What do you wish? How can we serve you? What shall we propose?’ The result is that . . . you have lost all your power and that within your city you are the slaves of those who enrich

themselves at your expense. . . . Even more, you think yourselves compelled to a deep gratitude to the men who take upon themselves the task of preparing your banquets, though they do it with your money and to your hurt.

Miracle ! The law was repealed.

The first Philippic did no more than unmask a battery that Demosthenes had directed against the conqueror. The Athenian orator was one of those fighters who adapt their strategy to the opportunities of every moment. The persistence of the enterprises of Philip caused the persistence of the counter-strokes of Demosthenes. The Philippics multiplied, and of all the diverse aspects of the perseverance of that militant statesman none is more worthy of admiration than that presented by those formidable bursts of oratorical artillery fire, the object of which was to dislodge the enemy from all his positions at the beginning of the battle. In those invectives Cicero sought inspiration for the murderous effects of his polemic. But Demosthenes did not engage in polemics. He can-

nonaded. He cannonaded first of all to destroy the best-concealed works of the enemy. He cannonaded to enlist his fellow citizens in beginning the battle, to thwart the treacherous, to encourage the faint-hearted, to impart his own stoicism to those whom he sent against the enemy.

In no other country, in no other time, has there been anything comparable to the achievement of Demosthenes. It was great as much through the energy and persistence that went to its accomplishing as by its deliberate boldness in throwing a whole people into the miseries of war in order to save them from worse calamities — loss of independence, the humiliation of servitude, the surrender of any high dignity of life.

For Demosthenes did not delay in order to approach indirectly difficulties that would have made any other man hesitate. No, he saw, he described things as they were and measured the obstacle only to adjust his leap to it. He wanted to carry the war into Macedonia so as not to have to repel the enemy under the walls of

Athens. Willingly or unwillingly, a people can throw itself emotionally into war. To keep at war in obedience to the stern calculations of a prudence that calls for disregard of self in the interest of a superior cause is an undertaking that requires a much broader spread of wing. A man was needed — the *solitary man* of Ibsen — to accomplish it. But even that was not enough. Demosthenes had not only to determine the end; he had also to plan the means:

You have never known how to take full advantage of your opportunities. . . . Do you hear that Philip is in the Chersonesus? A decree for the Chersonesus. That he is at Thermopylæ? A decree for Thermopylæ. . . . You follow round at his heels, never yourselves planning any important military measure, never foreseeing anything, awaiting the news of the disaster of yesterday or of to-day.

And again:

The most formidable enemy that threatens Athens is not the King of Macedonia, but your own supineness. If Philip should

die to-day, it would create for you another Philip to-morrow.

Alas, the time was gone when in indescribable days a preëminent Athens turned back the Great King. The noble city had fallen to the point of recruiting mercenaries. Before the struggle the oligarchical party, of which Phocion was the soul, regarded the victory of the Macedonian as inevitable and thought only of conciliating the conqueror. Demosthenes and his '*democracy*' defended what remained of Hellas. Only, Demosthenes kept up his struggle, and *demos* fluctuated between glory and shame, uncertain where the profit lay. When a people deserts itself there is no magician who can save it. '*What is Philip doing?*' was ever the question of the day at Athens, whereas Demosthenes went about, demanding, '*What are we doing?*'

Philip threw himself unexpectedly on Olynthus, which demanded help of Athens. Deliberations followed deliberations. Three flaming harangues came from Demosthenes — the Olynthiacs. Three em-

bassies succeeded. After many words Athens exerted itself to send some mercenaries. The 4000 soldiers finally despatched under Chares arrived too late. Olynthus was burned and its inhabitants were sold. Some Greeks, in consideration of the gift of a few woman captives, lent their aid to the triumphal celebration of the Macedonian. With Olynthus thirty-two other Greek cities were destroyed. Athens had stood idly by.

A long and useless narrative would be needed to describe the phases of the disappointing controversy between Athens and Philip that ended the first Holy War. The embassy to Philip, of which Æschines and Demosthenes formed a part, was the occasion of a debate between the two orators as warm as it was brief, in which the Macedonian, through the complicity of Athenian weakness, had from the start all the advantages.

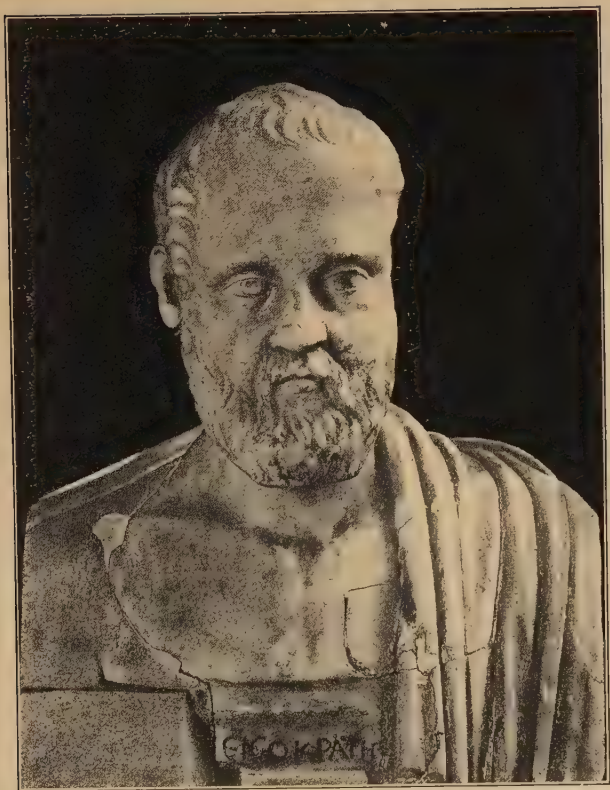
According to Curtius, however, 'Philip did not gain everything, Athens did not lose everything. To the simulacrum of war that had dragged on for ten years succeeded

a simulacrum of peace that lasted seven — a period during which germinated the seeds of the decisive struggle.'

The warnings of Demosthenes had gone disregarded. Isocrates himself celebrated in Philip a new Agamemnon who was to unite under his scepter all the people of Greece in the prosperity of a peace imposed by arms. With what oratorical animation he rose 'against those who make an uproar in the tribune, *against the men who, envious of the powerful monarch, unceasingly work to make him suspect, and who, regarding the general peace as an attack on liberty, sow disorder in the cities!*' That is how one of the greatest orators of Athens, presumably a patriot, did not fear to judge the policy of Demosthenes. What, then, could not the men who had sold themselves say?

Crafty and vain, Isocrates, like Demosthenes, wanted to save his city from the enterprises of Philip, but, wholly impregnated with the Hellenic fallacy, purposed to escape from the Macedonian peril by a stratagem that would result in a complete

surrender to it. If Philip should succeed in dominating Greece, no one doubted that he would want to lead it against the Persians. Why should not the Greeks begin where they were sure to end — why, that is, should not all the Greeks unite under Philip and throw themselves on the states of the Great King? The puerile suggestion of a rhetorician, it had no other fault than that of postponing the immediate problem for the sake of leaving the weakness of to-day the dream of an appeal to a supposititious to-morrow. To avoid fighting Philip, they were to fight for him. On that matter, Isocrates, in order to juggle away the question of hegemony, which he had at first demanded and of which he had later prudently refrained from speaking, took the trouble to write to Philip a laborious letter like a student's exercise. The impetuous conqueror did not embarrass himself about such trifles, for he knew what he wanted. Nevertheless, Isocrates by railing against Demosthenes brought to Philip too efficacious an aid to be altogether neglected.



ISOCRATES

The bust in the Villa Albani, Rome

In human conflicts, direct, open opposition has not always the decisive value that it may seem to have. Demosthenes, in drawing up the balance sheet of his defeat, should have added to it the indirect aggression of every degree of treason. The reply of Philip was to ravage Phocis and to destroy its cities. When he had crossed the pass of Thermopylæ, the first Holy War, which had lasted not less than ten years, came to an end.

Came to an end, I said. But let us consider a little. The universal connivance had admitted Philip to the Amphictyonic Council. He had even become the president, and in virtue of his position found himself the arbiter of the pretended Hellenic confederation. His first care was to relight the scarcely extinguished flame of war. Still on the pretext of the impious cultivation of the field of Apollo, he had a decree of extermination passed against the Phocians. The Athenians threatened, and at once Philip suavely prepared a new peace — as valuable as the old — on the sole condition that they should recognize

his admission to the Amphictyonic Council. Demosthenes did not oppose the demand. It was too late to question before the Council itself the pretended and hypocritical Hellenization of the King of Macedon.

It goes without saying that the new peace pacified nothing. An old quarrel between Argos and Messenia on one side and Lacedæmon on the other was carried by Philip to Athens, though no one could tell whether there was the least shadow of justice in the claim of any of the parties to it. Philip, who had made himself a navy, took Halonnesus, a little island in the Ægæan Sea, formerly colonized by Athens. Phocion, personally favorable to the King of Macedonia, commanded an Athenian army that prevented Philip from pushing his aggression against Byzantium, liberated the Thracian Chersonesus, and threw back the invader far from the shores of the Hellespont. Such things were the games of the Greeks, who did not always have the time clearly to distinguish the conqueror from the conquered, since war began again as soon as it was ended.

Demosthenes had let loose his Philippics in order to get from the Athenians a declaration of war against Philip at a time when, under the auspices of peace, war was actually raging. Under the urging of the orator war was declared, and Philip, by way of showing what he thought of the incident, departed to fight the Scythians — not, however, without providing himself with an opportunity for an offensive return at the first crossroad. That opportunity friend Æschines was not slow in bringing to birth in the Amphictyonic Council itself, in which, thanks to Philip, he had a seat as pylagore. Assured of success, the Macedonian agent put himself to no expense of imagination. The pretext that had served for the first Holy War was quite good enough for the second. This time, however, it was the Locrians of Amphissa that were supposed to have committed sacrilege. They had built a tile kiln in the field of Apollo. Æschines rose and gravely recounted the story, and not less gravely, the Amphictyons, who had received a hint, at once declared them-

selves in favor of war against Amphissa.

They skirmished while Philip was arranging to have himself given the mission of reducing not only the impious city, but all the states of Greece that had ranged themselves at its side. It was the *second Holy War*. With ardent speech Demosthenes summoned to combat all that he could gather together of the peoples still regardless of the dignity of independence. The cities of Achaia, Corinth, Megara, Leucadia, and Corcyra formed a confederacy. Warlike Thebes hesitated, but the audacity of Philip permitted no postponement of the event. Without declaring war, he entered Elatea, whence his direct threat to Athens was not to be tolerated.

Why was Athens so frightened at the news of Philip's entry into Elatea? It was because they expected nothing so little. Philip was then, they supposed, at Thermopylæ, the defense of which the Thebans, concentrated at Nicæa, assured. Athens was protected. No one could force the pass. To turn it it would have been necessary to cross Phocis from one side to the

other and the Phocians, crushed by Philip, — their cities had been razed, their country devastated, and themselves compelled to pay a semi-annual tribute, — would not have lent their help. But at this point the histories show the cities rebuilt and the state reëstablished. The half-yearly payments, the register of which has preserved for us the record of receipts, abruptly cease. Philip had paid for the right of free passage through Phocis in order to fall on Elatea. Thus the Athenians, who were expecting war in Thessaly, saw it suddenly at their very gates. ‘A plan profoundly conceived,’ said Demosthenes himself, ‘that reveals Philip in all his astuteness.’ The redoubtable hour had come when the decisive blow was to be struck. In the fullness of his strength Philip was ready for the battle. The Athenians as usual had not got beyond talk.

We must refer to the ‘Oration on the Crown’ for the spectacle of Athens under that thunder-stroke. It tore away the last veil and revealed all the fine speakers in their final confusion. Now that the game

was lost, their eyes were opened in spite of themselves:

It is evening. A man arrives who announces to the prytanes the capture of Elatea. At once some rise from the table, chase the traders from the public square, and burn their tents.¹ Others summon the generals and call the trumpeter. The whole city is full of unrest. The next day at sunrise the prytanes convoke the senate. On your part, you hurry to the assembly, and before anything is discussed or decided in the council the people are ranged in their places. Soon afterwards the senators arrive, the prytanes recite the news and make appear him who brought it. The man himself talks. The herald asks who wants to speak. No one rises, yet all the generals and all the orators are present. And the country calls for a citizen who will speak to save it! For the voice of the herald, which is raised when the laws so order, is the voice of your country. Who then should offer himself? . . . But the day, the moment, demanded not merely a citizen who is rich and devoted; it demanded a man who had followed affairs

¹ In order to make a free space for the assembly next day.

from the beginning and who had penetrated the designs of Philip. He who had not known them, who had not for a long time deeply studied them, however rich, however devoted, could not know what needed to be done or what counsel to give you. The man who had been seeking such a day was I. I arose.

Reading of the decree proposed by the orator:

Demosthenes, son of Demosthenes of Pæania, said:

Philip, King of Macedon, in contempt of oaths and of all that Greece reveres, has violated our treaties. He has taken cities over which he had no right. Other cities that belonged to us he has enslaved without provocation from us. To-day he still grows great by violence and cruelty. He takes our cities, destroys their government, and sells their inhabitants. Sometimes he drives away the Greeks and in their places establishes barbarians to whom he delivers the temples and the tombs — a horrible impiety worthy of his country and his character. . . . So long as he touched only barbarian towns foreign to Greece, the Athenians could close their eyes. But when they see him put his hand

on Greek cities, treat some with ignominy and ruin and destroy others, they would regard themselves as unworthy of their glorious ancestors should they abandon the Greeks whom Philip has sold into slavery.

Demosthenes then describes the arrangements made to fight both by sea and by land, the great business of sending succor to Thebes, the embassy to the Thebans under his own leadership, the alliance that was concluded and the forward march that was begun — alas, to Chæronea. He continues :

That is what I did when the herald asked who wished to speak for the country. You, Æschines, you remained dumb, tranquilly seated in the assembly. I rose and spoke. But if you said nothing that day, at least speak now. Tell us what discourse I should have held, what opportunity I made the State lose, what alliances, what undertakings I should have counselled. Even if the future had been plain to all, if every one had foreseen it and if you yourself, Æschines, had announced it, shouted it to the world, — you, who did not open your mouth, — our city must still have done



THEBES

what it did do if it still dreamed even a little of its glory, its ancestors, its posterity. . . . If it had surrendered without a battle what our ancestors had bought at the cost of so many perils, Æschines, men would have despised you, but not the Republic or me. With what countenance, ye Gods, should we have borne the glances of those strangers who flock to Athens if we had fallen where we are by our own fault, if Philip had been named chief and master of Greece and if to prevent that disgrace others had fought without us. . . . The Athenians of the wars against the Medes did not seek an orator, a general who would have assured them a happy servitude. They thought that they could not live if they could not live free. No one of them believed that he was born purely for his father and mother; each of them believed that he was born also for his country. If I dared to say that it was I that excited in you that greatness of soul worthy of your ancestors, you might justly censure me. But I declare that all your great resolutions were your own, and that earlier than I the Republic thought with the same elevation of soul. I say only that some part of the glorious things it has done is owing to me.

Thus spoke Demosthenes, son of Demosthenes of Pæania, when in due course of law he was summoned by Æschines, the Macedonian agent, to justify himself before Athens. In the great crisis of his destiny I have wanted him to speak for himself in the very words in which before the Athenian people, his judges, he answered his most perfidious enemy. I wanted the full light of those words on his counsels and on his action at the critical hour of the great tragedy when the Athenians, disconcerted by the thunder-clap of Philip's capturing Elatea, agreed in nothing except hesitation, when not an orator, not a general, dared express an opinion, when Demosthenes alone rose to the unanswered appeal of the herald, '*Who wishes to speak for the country?*'

When minds were confused and hearts daunted—the agent of Philip did not dare even to suggest the supreme act of cowardice that many would have suffered—Demosthenes saw and spoke and decided. He went himself into the thickest of the fight. You can take the measure of the

orator, of the chief of embassy, of the politician, of the whole man. When every one stepped aside in the silence of terror, he strode the stage, with high head, sonorous voice, and imperious gesture. He gathered the scattered wills into a sheaf of steel. He did not suggest, he commanded. And all the inertias and all the *nolitions* stood erect when the sounding trumpet appealed for the heroism that the day demanded. Superbly he does himself justice, for he fears no contradiction: ‘*If in every Hellenic city there had been a single man as faithful to his people as I was, if even in Thessaly and Arcadia there had been a single citizen who agreed with my sentiments, the Hellenes would have remained free, both below and above Thermopylæ.*’

It was over. The wavering crowd recognized the voice of the heroic times, the memory of which the great Athenian had evoked: Marathon, Salamis, Platea. From Mount Ægaleos, after having devastated the Acropolis, Xerxes again watched the battle. Again he fled. Even in the far-off future such moments still reverberate.

Æschylus did not sing the disaster of the Persians until after he had done his part at Salamis. This time again Greece would not be beaten without a battle, for Demosthenes was about to gather up in his strong hand all the power of that miraculous history, and if the warriors were as worthy of a great chief as their ancestors were in the day of Miltiades and of Themistocles, the new barbarian like the old would be thrown headlong back. Whatever happened, they could trust to the future. In such a cause heroism could not be in vain.

From the military point of view, Demosthenes based his play on the military virtues of the Thebans, to which Leuctra and Mantinea bore witness. They had to be detached from Philip, who held them under his threat. They had to be brought to the side of the Athenians, with whom they ran an open account. The decree was voted. An embassy departed for Thebes. Demosthenes was at the head of it. Before the Theban people, inheritors of a great history, and before the envoys of Philip, who disposed of all the means of

persuasion, the Athenian was about to stake the life or death of Greece. On that dramatic day Demosthenes gained the victory, for he was prodigal of himself. The Thebans did not deny Hellenism. Whatever may be the decision of arms, the cause of thinking men will survive every event. There is no irreparable defeat except for the cause that is abandoned. Demosthenes shows us that at certain hours a man is enough to turn a battle lost into a battle gained.

Alas ! we go to Chæronea, where through Philip and Alexander was brought about a catastrophe to idealism, from which no one except Demosthenes could have appealed. Charged by Alexander, the 'sacred battalion' of the Thebans was worthy of the enemy. Victory hesitated. But adverse Fate had spoken. On that day Macedonia, which formerly had sought peace when it saw Thebes and Athens unite, succeeded in reëstablishing a chance-won fortune.

At the decisive turn of his victory, Philip could not help being amazed at the peril of final defeat to which, single-handed,

Demosthenes had been able to expose him. He regarded it as a signal favor of fortune (according to Antipater as reported by Lucian) that the armies were not led by Demosthenes, whose speeches, like battering-rams and catapults put into action at Athens, had shaken and ruined all his plans.

After the victory of Chæronea, Philip never stopped telling us of the extreme peril to which a single man had exposed us. ‘Yes,’ said he, ‘if against all hope, through the ignorance of the Athenian generals, through the bad discipline of their soldiers, and even more through an unheard-of favor of fortune, we had not emerged victors from the combat, this one day would have exposed us to lose at one stroke both the empire and our lives. Demosthenes, reuniting against us all the principal republics, had brought together all the forces of Greece — the Athenians, the Thebans, the Bœotians and their allies, the Corinthians, the Eubœans, and the Megarians, — and had forced them to expose themselves to danger in order to prevent me from penetrating into Attica.



CHERONEA

The ruins of the marble lion erected over the tomb of the Thebans
who fell in the battle



Plutarch also, who likewise cannot be suspected of being partial to the Athenian orator, tells us that Philip, again sober after the intoxication of success, shivered at the extreme danger that Demosthenes had by his individual efforts made him run.

Master of the field, the conqueror was about to throw himself against the Persians — for in those days our Gaul was disdained — when he was assassinated at a festival of truly Asiatic pomp in which he had a golden statue of himself carried before him. Alexander was there to undertake the enterprise and to enlarge its scope. He was not to fail. Had Greece been master of its fate, it would never have thrown itself into India, where there was nothing to call it. The Gauls, by the character of their minds better prepared than the Greeks for the access of mental energy that Greece had the greater power to initiate, were awaiting the day when they should know the inspiration of Greek thought. A direct Hellenization would certainly have supplied us with intellectual bases quite different from those which we

received from the heterogeneous Greco-Roman civilization that, until the Renaissance had rewelded the great links of human culture, merely resulted in the double degeneration of Rome and Byzantium. The fact is what gives us the right to say that with the triumph of Demosthenes the fate of the world would have been changed, since civilization would have followed a different course.

But implacable fate was henceforth fixed. Through the prudent care of Alexander Thebes was razed. Thebes had revolted while he was ravaging Thrace, and the Athenians — O shame supreme! — denied the alliance that Demosthenes had won for them. With his own money the unconquered Demosthenes went to the help of Thebes. In vain. Fortune did not tire of betraying him. He did not tire of resisting. To punish Athens for its cowardice, Alexander insisted that the orators whom he had not been able to buy should be delivered to him. The name of Demosthenes was at the head of the list. Phocion, showing himself unmis-

takably for what he was, proposed to the people that they consent to the cowardly surrender. But the Athenian once again stood erect, and Alexander calmed down. The art of abusing your strength sometimes lies in not exerting it. Demosthenes, however, was already at the ramparts. Far from giving himself up to despair, he reanimated the courage of his fellow citizens and got everything ready for a new effort. He regulated the distribution of the troops, he directed the building of entrenchments, and saw to the provisioning — to such good effect that the Macedonian, who thought his final victory assured, gave up the idea of carrying Athens by force.

To those acts of extreme audacity the response of the sycophants had long been prompt. Demosthenes had ‘violated the laws,’ he had ‘embezzled,’ he had ‘committed treason.’ To put an end to such odious maneuvers, Ctesiphon, following an ancient custom, proposed that a crown of gold be voted to Demosthenes. Æschines opposed the plan. The lists were open.

Under the eyes of the Athenian people, who, though a party to the case, were also the judges, the greatest oratorical duel in human history was about to be fought.

CHAPTER VI

THE famous debate 'On the crown' that Ctesiphon proposed to award to Demosthenes lasted no less than eight years. In the hot, merciless combat between the two orators, the most powerful that ever lived, was summarized the decisive crisis of the history of that time — a crisis the issue of which was to determine the broad lines of future progress. As a part of the education of my youth, this masterpiece of Demosthenes was placed in our hands that we might seek in it lessons of grammar, but we were absolutely forbidden to read a translation, which would have given us access to the general theme of the drama in which the future of our civilization was represented. I rejoice that all that has been changed. The chances of life were needed to carry me back to texts that everything had been done to turn me away from.

I shall be excused for not giving my judgment on the art of Demosthenes.

Aside from my not being qualified to form an opinion, I am interested in ideas, and I find that art happy which clearly expresses them. At bottom the art of Demosthenes can be summed up in a word: his temperament. His speech was his life leaping forth at the will of an impetuous fortune that carried men through the dark reefs in the currents of degeneracy. In the days when my teachers disgusted me with 'On the Crown' by refusing to let me know it, the futility of criticisms of style, exclusive of any appreciation of ideas, could not but increase an indifference, the burden of which has long rested upon me. Other days are come. I shall be happy if I can aid our youth to hasten the time of real comprehension, a time that in any event will be too slow in arriving. It escapes our attention that the history of all times, less diverse than it seems, everywhere displays the same lessons, lessons that our perpetual preoccupation to carry our own poor measures with their disproportionate agitations turns us from. A day may come in which some future Aristotle will

know how to condense into some few pages, as La Boétie tried to do under the limitations of his time, a *compendium* of social man throughout an historic life that seems always new, but that at bottom scarcely changes.

At the present time every one is by way of becoming in divers degrees of imperfection either a writer or an orator. I do not know in what measure the conditions of social life are the better for that. It does not seem that the Athenian people, who were always talkers, used their gift to the best advantage. They let themselves glide on flowing wings, while the rhetoricians taught the mechanics of persuasion so that any one who wished might rule. If the art of the orator or of the writer could properly be taken as a gauge of the art of thinking, we should have only to congratulate ourselves on such a state of affairs. The success of Aristophanes shows us, however, that at certain hours the Athenian people could understand, if they could not judge, themselves. Flashes of lightning make the beauty of a storm at the

same time that they increase its severity.

The writer writes and needs only himself to win public recognition. The orator needs full sympathy between himself and his public not only while he is speaking, but also while he is resolutely carrying out a deliberate course of action. Emotional fervor rather than correct reasoning will swing the balance his way. There lies both the strength and the weakness of the orator. Though the most complete master of his art, he will, through the technique of his teacher of oratory, accomplish but ephemeral results if he does not give enough of himself to captivate listeners who will always prefer to elude the grip of his thought. Demosthenes brought every hour of his life into play. The frivolous Athenian wanted to reserve for himself some chances in defeat. History was determined by that trait. Demosthenes gave himself wholly. What matters it whether his oratorical education had been laborious or easy! It is not the art that in his case wins our admiration; it is the un-

reserved offering of an ideal strength of will. So understood, oratory rises to the rank of powerful action, and at that precise point it offends such listeners as are more easily united in a burst of momentary passion than on the discipline needed to effect the durable triumph of an idea. Had Demosthenes been restrained in his rhetoric, he would have gained no more. Fire and constraint cannot exist together.

Would any one contend that there is an art of giving yourself? Yes, doubtless there is such an art if we put disinterestedness aside and consider only the various ways of giving in order to get; that is to say, the chaffering of the market-place. Let a man nobly stake his best and finest self on a cause superior to all contingencies and the calculations of self-interest will vanish like fog before the gale. When the hero risks more than his life, he gauges his chances with the lucidity that his energy in the height of battle gives him. At decisive hours oratory acts like a catapult that shatters the obstacle at a single blow. The effect does not come of calculated

artifice; it is ballistic. ‘*Go say to your master . . .*’; at that single phrase of Mirabeau’s a whole assembly that had lost itself found itself again. There was no need to go on; the barricade was carried. And the proof of it lies in the emotion that we can still feel to-day, although the concluding phrase — which passed unnoticed at the moment but in which Mirabeau declared that the men of the Assembly had rather yield to force of arms than let themselves be killed — greatly attenuates its strength. When from the top of Gemoniæ, Cicero, having mastered the factions, threw to the tumultuous populace the one word of defiance: *Fuere*,¹ he attained the summit of eloquence, for he brought that *impetus* which decides the fortunes of the day.

When Philip was in Elatea, when Athens, crushed under the weight of its weakness, sought inspiration to courage and found only polluted springs, the day of Demosthenes came. It is not enough to say that he was worthy of the hour: he took possession of it. Before him,

¹ They have lived.

mingled pell-mell in the crowd, were the good and the bad together — the respectable folk who had rather die for Athens than act the part of men in the Council, the subsidized band of Philip, the mute herd of all the desertions accomplished or suggested, the sacred battalion of every surrender and every discouragement. Nothing was lacking. The enigmatic *Æschines* was nodding his head at the thought of all the machinations that tempted him. No one spoke. With lowered eyes the ‘defeatist’ himself feared to hasten the hour. The oppressive silence held the hearts of all in anguish. They waited for a man to rise, and behold, before them all the superhuman man was on his feet. With a word he tore away the veil of things, he thrust the sword deep into the open wound, he turned their unwilling eyes on the living horror of that which was. So, later, *Cicero* acted and so acted *Mirabeau*, opening the wound at the hour of supreme peril. The oratorical effect leaped forth unsought; a sentence was enough: ‘I have seen, I have spoken, I

have willed, I have dared.' There could be no reply. The catapult had discharged. The utterance was also an act. Orator and hero, Demosthenes drew to his side all those rags of lives lost to a full realization of the great days. But they would not be able to maintain themselves at his height. For his part he would know how to drape himself in the shroud that he foresaw. Such greatness must be paid for. Only the man of action can say whether the price exacted for the sublime bolt of Jupiter, the Thunderer, is too great.

The event was such that, in the implacable duel between those two resolute enemies, there was established a sort of 'judgment of God,' which was invalidated by history, since the cause, remaining victorious on the field of battle, could not stand the test of the morrow. Between Demosthenes and Æschines there was all the distance that there is between an ideal of a nobler humanity and the brutal empiricism of an 'order' of slavery. However great the men may have been, each in his own rôle, the case they argued was

greater than they. However perfect may have been their power to think, to speak, and to live, one in the splendor of his independence, the other in the degradation of his servility, something soared above the lists on which the eye of a dreaming and thinking being was and will remain fixed — a wide-winged ideal of man held down by his earth, a phosphorescent gleam of philosophy that he makes into a star, a quickening of sensibility that he hopes will illumine human life.

We owe to that trial, the most celebrated in history, the possession of a proud apology for Demosthenes by Demosthenes himself; that is to say, we can hear reverberate from the abyss of the ages the very roar of the lion. Thus we are able still to experience the shudders of those dreadful days in which what was finest and what was worst in the City of Thought encountered like two avalanches respectively of life and death in the furies of eternity. For that Demosthenes and Æschines did typify life and death makes the general significance of those two su-

premely representative men confronting each other under the eyes of a crowd that judged itself when it believed it was judging them. One was bending all his energies toward an ideal of public sensitiveness in which he placed his hope of humanitarian progress, the realization of which depended on the very weaknesses that he had to compose it of; the other was the distinguished agent of all those weak men who when they please can mask with fine phrases the basest and most shameful surrenders. Both were masters of the artful charm that equally well can adorn or disfigure the truth.

The 'judge' was on his seat, come from whatever place of business was his, — stall, workshop, office, — proud to be concerned in the momentous sentence that was asked of him. He was ignorant. He either knew that he was ignorant or he was unconscious of it. He was beset by all the solicitations, by all the selfish interests of the hour, including first of all his own. He could not have avoided being so beset, even had he been warned. To be accessi-

ble to this or that argument, good or bad as might be — such was his fate. Uncertain of himself, if his mind was free enough to realize it, his confusion might either clear or become more befogged when, face to face with the verdict he must return, he sounded the hesitations and prejudices of others. However, time passed. The combat raged no less fiercely within him than without, and since man, pale seeker after elusive truth, struggles among conflicting errors and truths, it happens that the error that springs from numbers may too often be held for truth, and that the truth that goes unrecognized by numbers may too commonly be held for error. And that is not so disastrous as any one might think, provided that, since the law of man is to change, all human affirmations are left a free chance to evolve.¹ Moreover, it certainly is in the exercise of this necessary freedom that are waged our greatest combats against

¹ Monarchy, oligarchy, democracy are never more than phases of the law of the strongest, on their way to being displaced.

the traditions of uncultivated man, who never admits that what remains of ancient ignorance can ever be modified by the acquisitions of later experience.

But, unlike the judges of Socrates, the judges of Demosthenes had before them no simple question of general sentiment. They had to solve the most urgent and the most characteristic empirical problem; should the people that had instigated the highest effort of civilization remain at all costs free to pursue its path toward the summits or should it hold out its hands for the chains of regression and thus have done with the dangers and the glories of superabundant vigor? *Should it? Could it?* On that point the judges of Æschines and Demosthenes were beyond question competent, since they were about to pass judgment on themselves. For who should be better qualified than those concerned to say what fortune, high or low, they felt themselves capable of realizing in their lives and transmitting undiminished to their posterity?

Unfortunately, the fluctuations of life need the perspective of history to be seen

in the clearest light. More unfortunately still, the combined hesitation and feebleness of the public can at certain hours prevail over the disinterested heroism of a great heart seeking to create a force by binding together vacillating individual wills into a united whole. Which way shall we turn? When men cannot clearly see the future, the weak, in opposition to the demands of the strong, will always postpone action to the morrow, though the strong are seeking, not to rule over them, but to impose on them the effort they need to make for their own liberation. That is the problem that is discussed in the 'Oration on the Crown.' It is the eternal litigation of men, whom the events of life at every moment call into court to pass judgment on themselves and thus to determine the future of those for whose destiny they are responsible.

Striking, indeed, is the light in which appears that historic aspect of the trial — a trial that we are concerned in as heirs both of its good and of its evil accidents, the total mass of which weighs on pos-

terity. As we watch the hand-to-hand struggle that even to-day holds us breathless, not only through the greatness of the antagonists engaged, but through the importance of the problem debated, we cannot help but be seized with the anguish of those old days, realizing as we do that the decision was left to the weaknesses of a crowd unconscious of the results of the verdict that it was to pronounce. Æschines, spokesman for Philip, expected everything from the moral weakness of Athens, which he sought at once to conceal and to exploit. Demosthenes knew only too well the inconstancy of the crowd. But he could not help expecting that from open debate there would come evidential proof sure to compel the assent of consciences ashamed of their too conspicuous sores. He anticipated victory, but defeat would have left him erect. That truth he would continue to make manifest in a final appeal in which Athens would be made to see that it had more need of him than he of it, since, should the verdict go against him, he, Demosthenes, would carry with him

into exile an Athens finer than the one he left behind — an Athens that his own effort had created and that would not cease to live in him.

Listen to that last cry:

What I had won with my words, Philip, coming unexpectedly, has destroyed with his arms. Is it for that that you reproach me, Æschines? What, you call me a coward and you would have had me, single-handed, stronger than all the power of Philip — and that by words alone! Had I then anything else than words under my control? Was I master of the fortune or of the courage of the combatants, was I master of that army for which you demand that I account? You must have lost your wits. Anything that an orator should do, ask of me; I consent. What ought he to do? Go to the root of questions, foresee consequences and announce them to the people? I have done all those things. Correct as well as he can sluggishness, irresolution, ignorance, rivalries — vices natural to a republic; bring the citizens into accord, into friendship, into zeal for the public welfare? I have done all those things. No one can accuse me of having neglected anything. And if any one should

ask me how Philip has succeeded in almost all his enterprises, everything would answer for me, by his armies, by his gifts, by his corruptions spread over all who govern. For my part, I was neither the master nor the general of our troops. I cannot be called to account for what they did. But in not letting myself be corrupted by Philip, I have conquered Philip. The corrupter triumphs when you take his gold, he is vanquished when you refuse it. My country, so far as it depended on me, has, then, remained undefeated.

Thus spoke the man beaten at Chæronea. The Athenian people conceded to him the hope of revenge. At what price? For the good or for the evil of humanity history fatally pursues its course. When Æschines was defeated, there remained Demosthenes and Philip. The drama unrolled in its imperturbable cruelty. To the mischances of fate that man cannot escape, he must add those other misfortunes that his own resistance to his highest destiny brings down upon him. The strength that wills is in conflict with the weakness that does not dare. A magnificent pride compels us to

see in ourselves the bearers of the ideal; the intoxication that we feel on the height tempts the wings of thought. Have we, then, done our utmost when with the instrument of our greatness in our hand we show ourselves incapable of any other effort than that of admiring ourselves? If we find that we can understand the highest employ of ourselves, though we cannot attain it, if unselfish impulses engage us in dreams too beautiful for our wills to attempt, it is because implacable fate decrees that our efforts shall hurl themselves against those united, though contradictory, weaknesses across which the whole problem of social man is to make his way. Whoever holds himself aloof from the dangerous adventure may perhaps live and die in animal happiness. May we be pardoned for aspiring to something better? In words at least each one of us is eager for the results that in the tumult of suffering, borne by us in such different ways, give us, according to the chances of the day, some accidental happiness.

That is true of Demosthenes just as it is

true of all those who risk themselves in the tumultuous fortunes of the crowd with its bold disregard of the decisive inadequacy of the individual. The great Athenian accepted all the chances incident to the struggle of man against man; he suffered them simply, proudly; not to complain of them, but with full hands to draw from the struggle a renewal of that invincible courage the foundation of which never failed him.

CHAPTER VII

DEFEATED because the weakness of the Athenian people in the Council was inevitably bound to translate itself into a corresponding weakness of action, Demosthenes found himself again constantly facing the same enemies, who now led in their train the forces that the defeat of Chæronea had added to their ranks. It was the base human mixture in all its ugliness. Of the heaped-up turpitudes of their attack there remain two imputations against Demosthenes. He had fled at Chæronea. He had accepted the gold of Harpalus as the price of his silence.

Flee at Chæronea? Demosthenes was, then, present at the battle? In what capacity? No one tells us. If he had had to assume the responsibilities of military command, some one would certainly have told us, since in that case his fault would have been the greater. A simple soldier he may have been, for as such he had fought under Phocion in Eubœa. That his tem-

perament should have overmastered him and that he should have wanted to be present on the field of battle seems consistent with all that we know of him. As to what figure he cut there, we have not even the pretended precisions of calumny. He threw away his shield? No evidence. A vague allegation, with no responsible author, is all that any one ventures to present us. When, in a spirit of base adulation, Horace boasted of having thrown away his shield at Philippi both high and low under Augustus congratulated him. But that Demosthenes, under other conditions of service, should have forgotten himself in the same way, all the sycophants of every land and every age want to impute to him as a crime that nothing can atone for.

If I believed that Demosthenes really fled, I should note the fact as a weakness to be put opposite his many splendid deeds. But how can I accept, even hypothetically, an imputation that comes from hired slanderers who cannot base their accusation on any actual facts? The battles

of the age were preëminently hand-to-hand struggles in which each man alternately engaged or avoided combat according as his chances seemed to him good or bad. Homer has shown us Hector fleeing before Achilles, but no one on that account has ever imputed cowardice to the Trojan hero. It may be that Demosthenes temporarily declined the attack of a superior force, since so to act was then, as it is now, a part of the fighter's art. The simple truth apparently is that Demosthenes with what remained of the Athenian force fell back before the conqueror. I do not see what he could have accomplished by staying on the field of battle—unless it were to yield himself a prisoner. We may be sure that if Æschines had had any evidence to produce on the point, he would not have let the chance slip, since the trial was one in which all his interests were concerned. There is, moreover, a final reason that should remove the last vestige of doubt: the Athenians, his companions in arms, necessarily inclined to cast upon the adviser the responsibility for defeat, unani-

mously chose him to pronounce the funeral panegyric on the dead of Chæroneia. Demosthenes was not one of those men whose deportment on the field of battle could pass unnoticed. Only one witness rose against him, and the accusation faded away almost before it saw the light. That fact alone is enough forever to settle the question.

But the death of Philip under the dagger of Pausanias had restored to the patriots of Thebes and of Athens the hope of revenge. Although Alexander had already shown on the field of battle traits of bravery, many were pleased to maintain that he was no more than a big spoiled child. Hellenic independence might find a new day. At the news of the murder, Demosthenes had appeared on the public square crowned with flowers in honor of the revenge on the Macedonian enemy. He at once called all Greece to arms and wished to engage the King of Persia to help, either with subsidies or with arms, the new attempt of Hellas to recover its liberty. But Alexander, worthy son of



ALEXANDER THE GREAT

The Tivoli herm in the Louvre, Paris

Philip, was ready either for peace or for war. For him to appear at the head of his armies was enough to reduce the boldest to silence. Athens itself sadly sent ambassadors to him, in the front rank of whom was no other than Demosthenes. But midway on his journey, he resumed his first rôle and renounced the mad chances of a diplomacy that could have no other result than complete humiliation.

However, the Macedonian had to encounter the rebellion of Thrace and while he made war, Thebes, assuming the glorious rôle that Athens had surrendered, threw itself proudly into the ultimate adventure. It called all Greece to arms against the common enemy. Arcadia showed itself faithful to the great memories of the past. Argos and Elis ranged themselves at the side of Athens — Athens that formerly stood in the front rank of the struggle for independence, but that now was content to find a place in the second. While Athens in terror of Alexander overflowed with talk and shuffled on the threshold of action, Demosthenes

sent to the Thebans arms bought with his own money. Meanwhile, Alexander leaped back from the farther side of Thrace, and Thebes was destroyed, razed to the ground with fire and sword before it knew where it was. Nothing remained for Athens except to win pardon for its latest velleities toward freedom, if pardon were still attainable. While Greece, terrified at the frightful execution of Thebes, looked on, Alexander exacted that the chiefs of the party of independence should be delivered to him. Of course, the name of Demosthenes was at the head of the list, and of course the contemptible Phocion shamelessly advocated the act of supreme dishonor. He declared to Demosthenes that the time had come for him to die. But Athens, though trembling, did not dare descend so low. An eternal disgrace was preparing for Alexander when no one knows what revulsion of a soul affected with Hellenism disarmed his wrath.

Not less strangely the youthful dreaming conqueror, in whom were always united the impulses of implacable cruelty and the

visions of an imagination quick to throw him into the wild adventure of India, seems at that very hour to have caught through the veil of his destiny a glimpse of the vanity of his victories. The man who was to be destroyed by his conquests caught, as it were, a gleam of inexorable fate. What a supreme reverse it was to be reduced to wishing that the crown should fall *to the most worthy* through incapacity to appoint himself as his own successor! In order to find some one to continue his 'work' he would at least have had to be in a condition to examine and comprehend himself, and that at the very time when the confusion produced by his daily successes, won with no settled purpose, gave him no leisure for self-observation. Yet in the very moment of settling his last account with Athens, Alexander had a vision of the future that with unconscious hands he was preparing for exhausted Hellenism, the civilizing force. 'If some misfortune should befall me,' were the words that escaped him, 'on Athens would fall the lot of governing Greece.'

What a comment, unhappy man, you have made on the adventure of your life! Prompted to self-examination by a gleam of reason, you were so moved by the fragile nature of your supremacy that suddenly there was revealed to you the permanence of the vague idealism in that very freedom of Greek thought which you had tried with all your genius to destroy. You had just crushed Thebes, you had but now reserved death for the man who was above all others the representative of Greece, and by a change of conscience the profound significance of which escaped you, you were brought to appeal from yourself to the liberating forces against which you had always raged.

✓ That return to wisdom did not last long. Alexander threw himself on Persia and on India, where, to the profit of no one, he expended incredible resources of endurance and courage, marred, however, by all kinds of excesses that sometimes ended in murderous tragedies. Greece looked on indifferent. What do I say? It supplied him with soldiers and colonists who carried

with them the Hellenic arts, examples of which we are stupefied to find in the Greco-Bhuddistic sculptures of the Bactrian art, styled of Gandhara.

In the course of the expedition occurred the incident of Harpalus, the source of such cruel and resounding scandal in the life of Demosthenes. Harpalus was one of the improvised governors whom Alexander set up as he went along and whose function it was to organize 'a Macedonian peace' in his disordered conquests; that is to say, methodically to oppress the populations and to make them give up all the gold and all the soldiers they could supply for victories without purpose and without result.

Would-be masters of the world are fated to want to attach to themselves *by interest* lieutenants whom they wish to be *disinterested*. For Alexander, condemned to exhaust himself in success, the special danger lay in having to retreat across revolted countries. The prestige of force seems so decisive to human herds that in history we have seen it cloak every abuse. But Alexander, thanks to his soldiers, who

one day refused to follow him any farther, escaped the difficulties of the return, which were far greater than those of the conquest. Having been rejoined in the Persian Gulf by the fleet of Nearchus, he appeared again on the Euphrates where the lightning stroke of his death awaited him. His ambition, since he had never met with anything except victories, was to leave behind him submissive countries, 'governed,' according to the methods of Asia, to the last drop of their blood. For that task he was, as I have said, content to find governors at once interested and disinterested.

Can any one be astonished that Harpalus, governor of Susa, where he was amassing 'treasures' for the account of Alexander, should have feared to let him come to demand a settlement? The most prudent course seemed to him to take flight with Alexander's wealth and his own, which, like his master's, was made up of the property of others.

He presented himself, then, at the Piræus with his treasures and with six thou-

sand mercenaries to put at the service of Athens if it wished to march against Alexander. In concert with Phocion, Demosthenes wisely refused to undertake such a venture. Harpalus, consequently, arrived as a suppliant. He was imprisoned, and his treasure was placed in the Acropolis under the charge of a commission of which Demosthenes was himself a member. But Philoxenes came to demand the extradition of Harpalus in the name of Alexander. There was serious danger in resisting; to yield under threat meant dishonor — such were the alternatives. Demosthenes remained silent. Thus he became the natural accomplice of the Athenians, who, shrewd fellows, lost in hesitating all the time that was necessary to let Harpalus escape. However, half the treasure had disappeared. Public opinion rose against the commissioners, in the front rank of whom stood Demosthenes. That some of them had let themselves be corrupted seems probable. Whether Demosthenes were one of the number is the whole question. Except in the case of a grave presumption, should

not so glorious a past as his put any man beyond the reach of such an accusation? He had aroused too many hatreds for the flighty people to halt on any such consideration.

He himself demanded an enquiry by the Areopagus. Six months of investigation did not supply an argument against Demosthenes that was strong enough to come down to us. His name was, however, inscribed in the list of incriminated persons and the vote of the Heliastæ made him a convict. I shall not ask what revulsion of feeling and thought may have assailed the man so brutally stricken in his most sensitive part by enemies, of whom assuredly many were not disinterested. In such extreme crises of human suffering, the heart, great in combat, ardent in the struggle even unto death, does not feel its wounds. Truth to say, accusations of all kinds and doubtful decisions of biased judges were things so common in Athens that their effect was singularly attenuated. The blow that hurt Demosthenes most was, perhaps, seeing himself accused by

his former companion in arms against Philip, the celebrated orator Hyperides, whose intervention may possibly have determined the verdict of the tribunal.

Hyperides, who was scandalously dissolute in his private life, was one of those narrow-minded men who refuse to recognize the need of any compromise in the management of practical affairs. He would take no account of the material and moral disaster that would ensue from a war against Alexander in support of a pompous rascal like Harpalus, and could not pardon Demosthenes for declining the proffered mercenaries. On some bits of tattered papyrus there remain a few fragments of his speech. We find in them assertions that are absolutely contradictory. In the absence of proof what matter the effects of rhetoric? We know nothing of the answer of Demosthenes. But if we had it, I should not seek in it defensive arguments. Rather should I look for the cry of a great soul indignant at the denial of an ancient friend, something like the '*Tu quoque*' of Cæsar to Brutus. But nothing was spared

the man who was destined to undergo for the noblest of causes every possible trial. And, to complete the lesson, two years later on the death of Alexander men saw Hyperides pardon himself for his inexpressible desertion of a friend by going to meet Demosthenes, who did him the kindness to forget.

The verdict meant that Demosthenes must either pay an enormous fine or suffer imprisonment for life. The triumph of the Macedonian party was too complete. Even when evil passions succeed, there are often vestiges of old shame, of which the hangmen of the day cannot rid themselves. No one dared to imprison Demosthenes. He took the road of exile, feeling no doubt for those who remained at the foot of the Acropolis a silent pity. From Ægina, from Træzen, he could see the shores of Attica. In what tumult of thought did he gaze on them? Men have attributed to him words of discouragement. Nothing is less probable, since at the death of Alexander he donned the harness with all his former courage.

Why after having lived the most disinterested life should Demosthenes have sold himself to adopt for a price a course of conduct that the people of Athens adopted for nothing? There are inferior souls in which 'good faith' is so confused a snarl that no one can disentangle the skein. Macedonian victories sufficed only too often to determine the 'convictions' of Athens. History, less obliging, reserves its right of review, in regard to both men and events. Plutarch, too quick to report the accusations of sycophants, recognizes that Demosthenes may have been the victim of slander. That is much from a writer who finds his inspiration in a Theopompus, Macedonian in sympathy, and, as that same Plutarch admits in his life of Lysander, more inclined to find fault than to praise. Fortunately, doubt is not even possible when confronted with this passage from Pausanias: 'Demosthenes has justified himself at great length, but he has also been justified by others. . . . After the death of Harpalus, assassinated in the isle of Crete, the slave who

had taken care of his treasures fled to Rhodes and was there captured by Philoxenes, the Macedonian who in the name of Alexander had before demanded that the Athenians deliver Harpalus to him. Put to the torture, the man revealed the names of all who had received money from Harpalus. Thereupon Philoxenes wrote to the Athenians letters in which he enumerated those whom Harpalus had paid, and the amount given to each of them. *But he did not name Demosthenes, though Demosthenes was Alexander's greatest enemy and had seriously offended Philoxenes himself.'*

The simple truth is that you cannot buy a man like Demosthenes: the irrepressible ardor of his temperament makes him superior to sordid avarice and even to temptation. Had he been capable of selling himself, he would have been incapable of keeping his pledges. Do we not know that time and again he put his own property at the service of the State?

At Sardis Alexander found the correspondence of Demosthenes with Darius,

proving that he had received from the Great King important sums of money as subsidies for his wars against Macedonia. No one had ever made any secret of those subsidies, of which Demosthenes had been the depository and distributor without ever giving the slightest cause for suspicion. In those days the victory of Athens was possible, whereas in the days of Harpalus, Demosthenes, carried away by invincible hope, offended all the cowards by his boldness. Those are injuries that men never pardon.

CHAPTER VIII

DEMOSTHENES was in exile. Is it quite certain that it was not rather Athens itself — so far at least as its finer self survived — that, far from the living source at which was nourished the ardent flame of unconquerable idealism, felt exiled from the moral fatherland that the man embodied? Demosthenes was silent, but there was ever the sound of vain words round the Acropolis. There were remains of ideology; there was no longer any inspiration. There was no longer any vigor of will. But Alexander died, and the empire of the conqueror suddenly crumbled without any one's having even posed the question of a successor. Though the vehemence of the Macedonian had not been restrained by any resistance, he had never been able to find anything that contained the germ of life, and each captive country, suddenly awakened from its slavery, knew not to whom to give itself. At certain favorable points, as, for example, Egypt, a diluted



DEMOSTHENES

Cast of the Vatican marble with the hands
discovered by P. Hartwig in the gardens
of the Barberini Palace, Rome

Hellenism could be met. Athens found itself sharply summoned either to return to its independence or to sink into a servitude that no longer had the excuse of the collar.

In the general emotion caused by the deliverance which now offered and of which Greece was no longer worthy, Demosthenes did not need the permission of the Pnyx to do his duty by his country. An Achæan League was forming, and Demosthenes was already in the Peloponnesus where the deputies from Athens were timidly gathering. Again he was haranguing the cities and summoning them to a great national coalition, the aim of which should be the independence of a regenerated Hellas.

For the regeneration of souls, we know that it was already too late. But Demosthenes did not ask himself the question, even when, after a defeat that seemed irreparable and that would have excused his doubting himself and every one else, he lay crushed under an infamous calumny. He had known how to speak; he had since learned how to keep silence — a

silence the right to interpret which he reserved to himself alone. However, the lightning had struck the Master. The great liberator who had survived Chæroneia only to be stricken down by Athens now found himself suddenly erect. His first action was to march against the enemy.

Athens could no longer endure the inexpiable injury that it had done itself. Like individuals, nations can find in injustice the advantage of a day. Like individuals, nations will repent them of their fault in so far as they can find any advantage in acknowledging it. No theatrical tone or gesture do they then fail to use to repair the irreparable or to attenuate the consequences, if that is still possible to words. Declamation against the ingratitude of kings or of peoples is wholly vain. The man capable of giving himself heart and soul to a great cause will not expect from the 'virtue' of others a reward that, just because it is a reward, can but lower him in his own eyes. We never omit to love and to celebrate men when our need of them is only too clear. There is no

more need of glorifying ourselves on that account than there is of making them the objects of recrimination when the wind has changed. The irreparable fault is failing to recognize when the country has too few resolute servants. For that fault will soon have effects from which it is not always possible to recover. The weaklings who at decisive moments fear lest too much shall be asked of them see themselves demanding more in consequence of the events that they themselves let loose. In exiling Demosthenes to Ægina Athens had harmed nothing except its own cause. We cannot find that the proscript spoke a single accusing word. He knew too well that an historic reparation would come too late for his country. For himself, so near the tomb, what mattered the remarks of traitors provisionally regretful of their treason?

At whatever moment the death of Alexander came, it could not fail to leave his incoherent conquests in doubt, since it would tempt the enslaved peoples with the hope of liberty. Liberty is a noble

ideal for which many heroes, known and unknown, have died — heroes who felt its grandeur, but who were not necessarily able to subject themselves to the discipline fitted to realize it. The question of liberty did not arise for the provinces of Asia, for they knew only how to change masters. Athens itself, always talking, no longer knew how to free itself from the authority of the orators. Condemned to make an effort for liberty, what last remains of energy could it bring forward either on the field of battle or in a kind of public life that it had glimpsed, but that it had failed to establish?

There was no longer but one question ; what would the Athenians be worth at the critical moment? Alas, on too many occasions already had they pronounced judgment on themselves. They could recall Demosthenes — for without him they were helpless ; they could send him a trireme for the sake of the pomp and ceremony in which those peoples excel who have lost the sense of action. There was a vain noise of words when the silence of

supreme devotion was needed. All the people, of course, flocked to meet him with their magistrates at their head, and those even who had expelled him were not the most sparing of their acclamations. We are even told that Demosthenes evoked the memory of the recall of Alcibiades, and congratulated himself on his superior fortune. In the remark there was perhaps some touch of irony. Alcibiades had not feared to take arms against his country; Demosthenes had been struck even in his honor for having served it exclusively.

Events hastened their march. The generals of Alexander had divided among themselves the leavings of their master — as was inevitable. Antipater had Greece fall to his lot. He was no Alexander, but neither were the Athenians any longer the Athenians of the great days. Once again it was necessary to pass from words to arms. Already we find Demosthenes in the midst of military action at the camp of the allies who under the command of Leosthenes were besieging Antipater in Lamia. We know that at first the military operations

were all favorable to Athens. Leosthenes had been among the first loudly to give his voice for the offensive. He knew how to set the example of courage in the front rank. All men less than forty years of age had been enrolled. Improvisation played the same part in both camps. The fierce Thessalian cavalry opposed the phalanx with good chances of success. If the enthusiasm of the first days could have held, the victory would have been in sight.

However, the position of the Athenian army was most perilous, for it was caught between Antipater, who had been forced back to Lamia and Craterus, who had been recalled from Phrygia as Leonatus had been recalled from Cilicia, to the help of the Macedonian. By a brilliant maneuver Leosthenes defeated Leonatus and carried Lamia, but was mortally wounded himself at the moment the city fell. Antipater succeeded in joining what was left of the army of succor and contented himself with holding the field and waiting the arrival of Craterus.

Why was that fine feat of arms without

a to-morrow? Antiphilus, who succeeded Leosthenes, was not inferior to him. There was still a leader. But the hour when there would no longer be soldiers was soon to strike. After that magnificent effort Athenian frivolity demanded its turn. Those same men who had fought like heroes decided that the war was ended, since they were provisionally the victors. Poor, indeed, was the figure that man would have cut who had refused to return home. Whatever might happen thereafter, the morale of the remaining troops had been destroyed. Craterus rejoined Antipater, and the battle of Cranon, the final effort of Hellenism, was lost as soon as begun. All was over forever. Greece, losing heart when in full sight of victory, forever lost the intellectual hegemony that a Hellenized Rome was destined to take for a time—in a form more durable, indeed, but disastrously exempt from Athenian flexibility.

The allies abandoned Athens abandoned by itself. It sank so low as to pronounce sentence of death against Demosthenes.

This time all was, indeed, ended with the hero of Hellenism, vanquished by Hellas itself. Death in Athens, death at the hands of Antipater — the choice mattered little. However, the Athenian wanted to spare his city the act of supreme abjection. Taking refuge in the temple of Poseidon at Calauria, he received without a tremor the soldiers of Antipater under the command of Archias, a man-of-all-work, of whom, thanks to Lucian, we have the report — the colored report of the headsman on the execution. Once an actor, he does not fail to dress the scene to his own advantage. He nevertheless avows that he was lavish with false promises in the hope of deciding Demosthenes to follow him. The inflated rhetoric that he puts into the mouth of his victim is obviously of his own composition, but he does not attribute to the defeated great man either a word or a gesture that is unworthy. A bit of railery on the way in which the comedian turned soldier played his rôle of ‘deceiver,’ a comparison of Archias to Creon getting ready to have the corpse of Poly-

nices thrown to the dogs, seems to fall within the probabilities of the actual discourse. The task was to exculpate Antipater and at the same time to respect the figure of the hero whom there was no further need to slander, since he was dead.

Nevertheless, the words of admiration put into the mouth of Antipater are unnatural. The conqueror of Cranon had not sent his soldiers to Calauria for the ceremony of an apotheosis. The truth stands out when Archias admits that he had decided to use violence. Demosthenes, seeing his intention, said :

‘Lay not your hands upon my person. I do not wish to help profane the temple. After I have worshiped the god, I will follow you without resistance.’

We saw him carry his hand to his mouth.¹ He stepped forward to surrender himself to the soldiers and fell dead.

The contrast between the artful suggestions of the executioner ready to violate the right of asylum and the entire lack of

¹ A small piece of poisoned reed.

all human weakness in the proud fighter who accepts his destiny without regret puts with its simplicity the final seal on this great drama of a superior life struggling against an overflowing sea of united mediocrities. Fifty years had not passed before that same Athenian public changed the sentence of death against Demosthenes into a decree providing that a bronze statue should be raised to him on the public square. The head of that statue has served as model for the busts in our museums.

Truly it would be too simple if accounts could be squared in such a way. No *amende honorable* from those who punished Demosthenes for having heroically devoted himself to their own cause when they themselves had deserted it, by betraying him and giving him up to torture, could compensate for such a life as his. Athens honor Demosthenes! What a strange reversal of rôles! Was it not rather Demosthenes who honored his country, gave it, indeed, more honor than it can be permitted to claim? Did it not deprive itself of the right to glorify him, since to

glorify him was most fatally to condemn itself?

I do not wish to fatigue the reader by enumerating all the points of the decree, but I will nevertheless give a few lines to show its character:

He used his own fortune for the good of the State. He freely gave eight talents and a trireme when the people rescued Eubœa, another trireme when Cephisodorus set sail for the Hellespont, a third when Cephisodorus, Chares and Phocion were sent by the people to Byzantium as generals; he ransomed many of his fellow citizens made prisoners by Philip at Pydna, at Methone, at Olynthus; charged by the people with the repair of the ramparts, he added to the outlay three talents of his own money and paid for two trenches with which he fortified the Piræus. He supplied arms to the citizens, he gave a talent after the battle of Chæronea, and a talent for buying grain during the famine; by his counsels, his eloquence, his devotion, he brought about the alliance with the Republic of Thebes, Eubœa, Corinth, Megara, Locris, Byzantium, and Messena; he brought together for the defense of

Athens and of the Confederation an army of ten thousand foot and a thousand horse ; in an embassy he persuaded the leagued cities to make a war contribution of more than five hundred talents ; he prevented Peloponnesus from sending reënforcements to Alexander against Thebes, etc., etc.

Yes, Demosthenes did all those things and many other things besides, many that were known and even more that were not known. Was it nothing — an entire people comforted and given renewed courage in the distressful hours when the noblest ideal of thought was in confusion? Was it nothing to have united in a common effort for greatness all those light souls who saw the heights and who yet resigned themselves to live basely under the sword of a tyrant? Was it nothing that he showed himself a man of valor and will to the vacillating crowd that, seeking a guide and finding one, yet knew him not? Was it nothing that he remained himself in the torrent of those who could not have lived even a parody of their proper lives unless

they had the foolish assent of men who would have felt lost if forced to rely on their own initiative? Was it nothing that he aimed at the highest; proud to will and to attempt, even though to succeed were too much to ask of fate? Was it nothing that after having spoken he knew how to keep silence as the supreme lesson for himself and for others? Was it nothing that he reached power without baseness, that he wielded it without fear, and that after his defeat he knew how to resign both it and life without remorse and without regret? Was it nothing that he never bent before the storms that lowered so many heads? Was it nothing that he lighted and unflinchingly carried the torch that was to be a beacon for the generations yet to come? Was it nothing that in spite of everything he remained resolute, that he aided and encouraged every lukewarm inclination toward liberty, that he did the little possible things without losing the most precious time of life in groans and recriminations? The Athenian people needed Demosthenes if it were to act in accordance

with its highest self; but for that Demosthenes himself needed only his own resolute thought. The sycophants reproached him for his pride. He never said a word to put himself above any one. What to some persons made him seem superior was their own inferiority.

There has come down to us from Demosthenes such a lesson as many even to-day are not fitted to understand. The ordinary man prefers to interest himself in the sayings and doings of conquerors who lead men to death when the real problem should be to teach them how to live. Demosthenes met war with war only because submitting to brute force can give but a debasing peace. The strong who hold all the rewards in their hands had no degrading attraction for him. At one stroke and for always he gave himself to that subtly inconsequential people — inconsequential because its yoked strength and weakness pulled against each other as they were alternately attracted by the fleeting flatteries it was eager to give and to receive. In the worst trials, respectful

of the Athenian ideal to which he had consecrated his life, he remained immutably faithful to his City and to Hellas, through which the civilization that we glory in was enabled to live and flourish. The trouble arose from the imperfect comprehension of the people in the world most able to comprehend, in the irresolution of the bravest people, in the defeats of the people who had won the most astonishing victories, the people most fertile both in superiorities and in inadequacies of thought and action. In the violent hours of its tormented history Greece knew all there is to know of the sublime ascents and of the frightful falls of a people that expiates its greatness by suffering all the disappointments that an ideal it sees but cannot attain is sure to bring to it. That was a costly illusion that nevertheless we cannot regret when we compare such noble misfortunes with the base mediocrity attained by the nations or the individuals who lose heart even before they have made an effort.

Human history is a planetary phenom-

enon, the natural miseries of which man can redeem with incomparable bursts of greatness, whatever may be his torment when he fails. Since the common lot is to suffer, call that man happy who has labored in a noble cause and pity him who, having sought nothing higher than himself, has known no more than the ashes of a selfish life vainly consumed. The sole effective lesson is taught by example. Perhaps we need less to attach ourselves to the fugitive results of a day than to the substantial joy of unrewarded self-sacrifice, even for a mistaken cause. Human annals are preëminently records of temporary defeats out of which the centuries make victories — sometimes of short duration. Men who have known triumphs, if they live too long, see them crumble to dust, but the vanquished man who does not accept defeat can always rise again, for his gain, or for his loss as chance may determine.

The psychological problem remains of making a more or less complete harmony among human discords through the more

or less rational guidance of more or less regulated action. The question of leadership seems the most important. How many kings (whether in name or in power) have been no more than vulgar prisoners! Whose was the will? That is something that is too often the hardest thing to know. Whether the inadequacy come from the leader or from the people, the effect is the same, for nothing can be done except through the full coöperation of both. In the case of Demosthenes we cannot doubt which was to blame; the leader was great, the soldiers were unfit. The lesson is too clear to be mistaken.

It is not enough for a man to play his part bravely in the feverish day of battle if he is not strong enough of heart and soul to persevere. Such a heart and such a soul were denied to the Greek. Because his ardor was but intermittent, he saw himself decline the happy sensation of continuing effort against too many adverse forces. Life is a perseverance. Greece flamed with idealism, but left us only the cinders of the finest effort of civilization

— cinders, however, that still are warm. Both in the great and in the shameful moments of his country, Demosthenes, never exalting himself, never letting himself be affected by the cruelest disappointments, knew above all the keen pleasure of spending himself utterly. The world is a struggle of forces in which the most violent may be the most feeble if it is not master of the time that alone can give value to the idea. Demosthenes did not triumph until after his death, but there was not an hour in his life in which he doubted the future. What matters the accident of a defeat to the man who sees in it only a preliminary to success?

Who can say how much the lessons of history affect us — even those over which we make the most chatter? The trade of some persons is to erect doctrines that time and place are sure to modify. Formulas fall from the professors; words, words, if action does not follow. The continents are peopled, civilizations follow one another. Every man is quick to offer himself as leader and the crowd sooner or later is

quick to take its revenge on the one who chances to be chosen. On words men agree; consider Demosthenes and Athens. Beyond that, they too often do nothing except quarrel; consider the same examples. The ocean of the unknown lies in wait for those abandoned things of which it makes its prey, and that prey will be ourselves so long as we have not attained the heights from which man and his tumults can be impartially judged. Words have their moments of glory; they are paid for with periods of exhaustion in which the hallucinations of the past leave the illusion of light. Then the words cede their places to other words, and but for the teaching of the great names that escape from the wreck there would too often remain for us nothing but dust and vanity of vanities.

‘Illustrious men’ attract our passing attention and are all the more compelling the more remote they are; that is, the farther outside the circle of our interests. With their help, the livelier intelligences need only the accumulated centuries in

order to find their place in the succession of ages and doubtfully to understand the hidden springs of human nature. Thus it was enough for Plutarch to trace the parallels between great lives, in order to reveal Greece and Rome to us after the long forgetfulness of the Middle Ages. He could see from his window the battle-field on which the fortunes of Hellenism had been overthrown. And although he was far superior to the ordinary man of his times, we can see that he did not always understand even the clearest of his own lessons. The events of history, being only what men make them, have no value for us outside the interpretation that we give them. The more light we can throw on the great men of the past, the more shall we clarify the spectacle of our own life. How like the past it is and how different! Great lives open for us avenues of light in all directions.

Demosthenes and so many others who now lie rigid in the ice of the past allow us still to meditate on the greatness and the weakness that in so many aspects are our

own. The Macedonian adventure has this great merit ; it shows the struggle of two champions equal in genius who symbolize the future and the past. Demosthenes, fighting even in death, carried the burden of the civilizations that were preparing — he was like the Titan lying conquered on the Caucasus, bearer of the sacred fire. Philip and Alexander are examples of rulers whom the disorder of their power condemns to bequeath to posterity nothing but the agitations of the weak. The conqueror can end only like Alexander or Napoleon. Therein lies capital matter for an *oration*, as said Renan, an expert in the art of *orating*.

On the field of Gettysburg, Abraham Lincoln, who in his own way was a fortunate Demosthenes, dared say that it was not in the power of the living to honor the great dead, but that it was proper to glory in the noble lives that were ended. The succession of ages is needed to filter out such thoughts. Who remembers today that George Washington, a mute but victorious Demosthenes, universally hon-

ored in the world as the founder of one of our most admirable nations, endured in his day a tumult of calumny and heard his departure from public life hailed as the end of an era of corruption and fraud?¹

Before him Demosthenes had known the people noted above all others for intelligence. What acclamations more flattering than theirs? What temptation to be intoxicated with his great dramatic strokes could have been greater! In triumph or in defeat, he showed the same simplicity, the same constancy always. He had no illusions about other men. He was ready for the worst. How could he be mistaken in himself, since he had given himself entire?

¹ During the agitation over the Jay treaty [with England] the rage of party spirit turned full against Washington himself. He was blackguarded and abused in every possible way. He was accused of having shown incapacity while General and of having embezzled public funds while President. He was nicknamed '*the Step-Father of his country.*' The imputation on his honor stung so keenly that he declared '*he would rather be in his grave than in the Presidency,*' and in private correspondence he complained that he had been assailed 'in terms so exaggerated and indecent as could scarcely be applied to a Nero, a notorious defaulter, or even to a common pickpocket.' Henry Ford Jones: *Life of Washington*, vol. xiv of American Chronicles, published under the auspices of Yale University.

At the bottom of his heart did he hope always against hope, or did he make it a point of honor to meet the eternal claim of a country the ideal of which he had saved? It does not seem to me that the question could ever have formed itself in his soul in these vulgar and mediocre terms. He willed, even to the end; that is all that any one can say. From the first days he could see that military courage lavished itself in vain if civil courage did not dare to employ it. Through everything he felt that there was no defeat for great souls. Thus he was spared the shiver of doubt before the fearful prospect of a life of idealism cast into the gulf of lost causes. Therein lies one of the finest lessons that he has left us.

Pascal, who divined everything, has pointed out to us that the great of this world are taken out of themselves by the exercise of power, since it turns them away from introspection, but that they are *left miserable in their fall because no one then keeps them from thinking of themselves*. That is a good thrust of the sword in the

vitals of human misery. Demosthenes, who knew no other urge than that of his noble cause, was on that side invulnerable. He suffered, he struggled, he was conquered without letting himself for a moment be distracted from the complete sacrifice of himself that he had made to his country. In the temple of Calauria his thought did not turn to himself. He made a courteous gesture to inimical fortune — and entered on a well-earned repose.

There is a superior lesson in tragic lives, wherein every one can find a subject of meditation fitted to his capacity. There is as fine a subject of meditation even in the high nobility of silent lives, the reward of which will be to escape the comment of mediocrities yet unborn. When Dionysius of Halicarnassus presents Demosthenes to us as the greatest orator of all time, I permit myself to find the praise inadequate, since words without action can be no more than vain sound. In the full sense of the words, Demosthenes was a man. It is enough. If you consider it well, it is much.

W. M. a



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